



UNMAS

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Updated August 2020



United Nations Mine Action Service, Afghanistan

IMPACT

 Since 1989, about **38,328** Afghan civilians 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. Anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature (APM/IN) and ERW from more recent armed clashes caused 98 per cent of the casualties recorded in 2019. In the same year, **77 per cent of the ERW casualties were children.**

 Humanitarian mine action partners in Afghanistan have cleared more than **18.6 million** items of ERW, some **743,025 Anti-personnel (AP) mines**, and some **30,634 Anti-vehicle (AV) mines** since 1989. Newer contamination 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 APM/IN threat which first emerged in 2010.

 A total of **32,531** hazardous areas have been cleared or otherwise cancelled since 1989. This represents over **3,126** square kilometers of land released for productive use to **3,102** communities. Some **1,504** mine/ERW affected communities remain in Afghanistan.

 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education was delivered to **over 10 million** individuals since start of program which includes people who attended for the first time and additional sessions.

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.

As of 1 June 2018, the DMAC absorbed all Afghan technical mine action personnel previously employed by UNMAS. The Afghan Government has asked UNMAS for continued technical support beyond 2018, in areas such as strategic planning and advocacy, resource mobilization, and funds

management and contracting. While some **79.3 per cent** of the known minefields and battle areas have now been cleared, **Afghanistan remains one of the countries most affected by landmines and ERW.** Some 3,754 identified hazards remain, 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.



ACTIVITIES



Progress towards Mine Ban Treaty 2023 commitments: UNMAS assisted the Government of Afghanistan to successfully request a ten-year extension to complete its clearance obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2012. A detailed work plan to achieve mine-free status by 2023 was developed, and DMAC and its accredited implementing partners continue to make progress towards this end. From January 2019 to August 2020, UNMAS-contracted teams cleared some 34.0 square kilometers of explosive hazard contaminated land, destroying 1,503 AP mines, 209 AT mines and 1,764 ERW.



Conflict Sensitivity: In the current context of the ongoing armed conflict, there is a need for a nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics, do no harm principles and conflict sensitive approaches to improve planning and implementation of humanitarian demining projects. To support this, UNMAS designed a conflict sensitivity project to be completed in three phases. The first is to mainstream conflict sensitivity into key documents utilised by UNMAS and DMAC; the second is to conduct conflict sensitivity trainings for implementing partners, UNMAS and DMAC personnel; lastly, to coach UNMAS and its partners through action plans to improve and mainstream conflict sensitive approaches into their organizations throughout 2019 and 2020



Almar District Girls' Central School: In December 2018, UNMAS responded to an urgent request from the Ministry of Education to clear ERW contamination in and around the Girls Central High School of Almar district in Faryab. The site saw a 40-day battle between insurgents and Government forces. UNMAS and its partners cleared the site, including the safe removal of a rocket-propelled grenade from the wall of the school. As a result, students were able to attend school and take their exams before winter break. "I'm happy our students were able to continue their education," said Ms. Kamal, the school principal.



Women in Mine Action: For the first time in the 30-year history of humanitarian mine action in Afghanistan, women began landmine clearance operations on 1 June 2018. Fourteen women were trained on non-technical survey and demining techniques. They released 51,520 square meters of mine/ERW affected land back to their community in Bamyan province. They also participated in vocational trainings, on topics such as archaeological excavation, tourism and business. Many of them continued to work as deminers, and contributed to clearing the last known minefield in Bamyan in 2019. The deminers are an inspiration for women around the world and were voted second in the Arms Control Association's Arms Control Person(s) of the Year 2019 award.

FUNDING

Increased financing is critical to realizing Afghanistan's plan to be anti-personnel mine-free by 2023, in line with the country's obligations under the Ottawa Treaty. Unfortunately, funding has dropped to 26 per cent of what it was in 2011 which has contributed to Afghanistan falling behind on its **Ottawa Treaty 2023** commitments. To meet international obligations and address new threats to civilians as a result of more recent armed clashes, **Afghanistan has requested US \$119 million for clearance activities this year**, out of a total budget request of \$129 million for all pillars of mine action in Afghanistan -of which, about 77 per cent remains unfunded.

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 1398

(March 2019 – April 2020): Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Netherlands, Denmark, New Zealand, CERF and Japan. UNMAS also thanks the following donors for continued bilateral support to the MAPA, including DMAC: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, PATRIP, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Sweden, the United States of America, and European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).

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