



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Seventeenth Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II on mines, booby-traps and other devices to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Statement on General Exchange of Views

Geneva, 11 November 2015

Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

Mr. President,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action¹ (IACG-MA), comprising United Nations entities involved in mine action.

I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The United Nations takes this opportunity to congratulate and welcome Grenada for its accession to Amended Protocol II.

Mines, booby-traps and other devices, including improvised explosive devices (IED), continue to kill and injure civilians, during and also long after cessation of hostilities. The United Nations witnesses the devastating impact of these devices every day, including where peace operations are deployed, such as in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Mali and South Sudan, just to name a few. In Somalia, civilians account for 75% of IED victims², despite security forces and government officials being the targets of armed non-state actors in the country. In Afghanistan, in the first half of 2015, IEDs accounted for the second highest number of civilian casualties (23% of all civilian casualties).³

The United Nations has provided support to States by advising, mentoring, equipping and training them to address the humanitarian impact caused by IEDs and their negative effects on populations. In Mali, in response to the increasing presence of IEDs, the United Nations produced risk education tools to help raise awareness for the protection of civilians.

¹ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer status), and the World Bank (Observer status).

² UNMAS Somalia - Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA)

³ UNAMA and OHCHR, Afghanistan, Mid-Year Report 2015, Protection of Civilians, see http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/2015/PoC%20Report%202015/UNAMA%20Protection%20of%20Civilians%20in%20Armed%20Conflict%20Midyear%20Report%202015_FINAL_%205%20August-new.pdf



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Where humanitarians had limited access, peacekeepers of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) were able to distribute these tools to affected communities.

In Myanmar, Nepal and Syria, among others, UNICEF also contributes to protecting civilians against the threat of IEDs through integrated programmes that include risk education and surveillance.

In Afghanistan, pressure-plated IEDs kill and injure more people than landmines today. The United Nations through UNMAS in particular is working with the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination and other partners on the clearance of abandoned IEDs.

In support of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Country Team, UNMAS surveyed and released more than 2,300 kilometres of road between January and September 2015 in South Sudan. This represented a 274% increase on the planned annual target.

It is also noteworthy that the United Nations continues to be committed to the CCW work on IEDs within the framework of Amended Protocol II. UNMAS will continue, for instance, to provide High Contracting Parties, upon their request, with technical expertise, lessons learnt, good practices, as well as shared experiences acquired in other affected countries.

In addition, the United Nations reiterates its determination to further strengthening constructive and fruitful partnerships with national authorities. In Yemen, the United Nations, through UNDP and UNICEF, is providing technical expertise to support the development of a new mine action strategy that goes along with the changing environment. In 2015, the United Nations also supported the Malian national authority in reporting on its compliance with AP II.

The United Nations also looks forward to the recommendations by High Contracting Parties, in particular those related to the development of technologies to protect civilians against indiscriminate effects of mines, as stated in paragraph 3 (d) of Article 13.

Last but not least, the United Nations thanks, once more, Member States for adopting, without a vote, the draft resolution on Assistance in Mine Action in the General Assembly Fourth Committee. This General Assembly resolution reaffirms the strong commitment and the key role of the United Nations in assisting affected states in facing the terrible impact of mines, explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and other associated explosive devices.

Thank you.