



**UNMAS**



من الشعب الياباني  
From the People of Japan

## Joint Press Release

United Nations Mine Action Service

Jerusalem

18 April 2017

### **JAPAN DONATES US \$ 905,650 TO SUPPORT THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION SERVICE INTERVENTION IN GAZA**

**Jerusalem (18 April 2017):** Japan has contributed US \$ 905,650 to UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service) through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action to continue protecting civilians and supporting reconstruction in Gaza.

With Japan's contribution of US \$ 3 million in 2015 and US \$ 500,000 in 2016, UNMAS has cleared and destroyed 29 tons of explosive material in Gaza. This protects Gazan communities by removing thousands of unexploded remnants of war, including 149 unexploded aerial bombs, while Israeli communities are protected through the removal and destruction of explosives materials which may be harvested and reused to produce homemade rockets. Moreover, the presence of explosive hazards in debris of destroyed or damaged infrastructure makes clean-up efforts extremely dangerous and obstructs socio-economic development.

Japanese supported UNMAS clearance efforts have returned a sense of security to families living, farming and building in areas they knew to be contaminated. Families like the Al Athamna, from Beit Hanoun, whose back garden was off limits to Haneen Al Athamna, 13, and her little brother, until UNMAS removed and destroyed the ERW buried underneath. This family is one of the approximately 1,500 direct beneficiaries living in approximately 220 housing units in proximity to hazardous sites suspected of hiding sub-surface ERW. With reconstruction and rehabilitation projects ongoing, it is imperative that such deep buried ERW are cleared before a building is manually and mechanically processed, to avoid accidental detonation of buried unexploded ordnance.

In 2016, UNMAS ERW risk mitigation support – risk assessments, risk mitigation training, and 24/7 explosive ordnance disposal support – has been crucial to ensuring the safe progress of 92 reconstruction projects, including some funded by the Government of Japan, all across Gaza. UNMAS also continues to work closely with the UNICEF and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to reduce ERW related accidents through the widespread delivery of ERW risk education in the entire Gaza Strip.

"UNMAS's activities in Gaza is the fundamental part of Gaza Reconstruction and we highly evaluated the achievement they have made so far. UNMAS plays an integral role not only to protect civilians but also to make reconstruction work go forward through their project," said Mr. Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for the Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority. "Japan has committed to providing a new package of assistance to the Palestinians in 2017 amounting to USD 46,688,925 mainly through international organizations including UNMAS, which is one of the Japan's most trusted and respected partners."

The Japanese contribution will enable UNMAS Palestine to complete its clearance tasks and to mitigate the impact of ERW during and in the aftermath of a future escalation of hostilities. UNMAS will also strengthen emergency preparedness of partner organizations, like UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA and JICA.

Japan is an important partner to UNMAS programmes in many countries. Since 1998, the Government of Japan has contributed USD 186 million to UNMAS global activities (through the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for



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Assistance in Mine Action). The Mine Action Service currently supports mine action programmes in Abyei (Sudan/South Sudan), Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur (Sudan), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and the Territory of Western Sahara (MINURSO). In the case of the occupied Palestinian territories, Japan and UNMAS will continue working hand in hand to support the reconstruction of Gaza.



*Mr. Takeshi OKUBO, Ambassador for the Palestinian Affairs & Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, examines tell tale aircraft bomb fragments that led UNMAS to an 2000 lbs unexploded aircraft bomb 12 meters below ground.*

*Photo Credit: UNMAS*

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