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**UNMAS**

## United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)

### DECEMBER 2013 UPDATE

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is mandated by UN Security Council resolutions 2024, 2126, 2075 and 2104 to ensure freedom of movement for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), as well as the identification and clearance of landmines in the Abyei Area and Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) and to contribute to supporting the protection of civilians. In December, field operations for the 2013-14 demining (dry) season have started; and training and accreditation for several UNMAS teams continued. The recruitment and integration of local deminers in UNISFA's Multi-Task Teams has also added a positive dimension to UNISFA operations this year. Major activities conducted by UNMAS and its implementing partners during December are summarized as follows:

- Mine action field operations began with the deployment of Multi-Task Team #1 from UNMAS' implementing partner, The Development Initiative (TDI). The Team, which includes local deminers from Abyei, received technical accreditation in early December and completed General Mine Action Assessments in 14 villages and two zones of Abyei town. Through the process of Non-Technical Survey, the Team assessed the potential hazards to UNISFA peacekeeping personnel, local communities and humanitarian actors in



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*Non-Technical Survey by TDI's MMT #1 in Abyei*

central and southern portions of the Abyei Administrative Area. During the Team's operations, they also conducted explosive ordnance disposal "spot tasks" and removed explosive remnants of war (ERW) found in Noong village and Agok village. The dangerous items will be destroyed during a bulk demolition in early January.

- The recruitment and integration of Sudanese national deminers, which was requested by the Government of Sudan, was successfully carried out in Kadugli, Sudan in mid-December. The deminers are undergoing a comprehensive training programme including demining skills and explosive ordnance disposal training. Upon completion of the course and formal accreditation in January, the deminers will be integrated in Multi-Task Team #2 and will conduct operations to reduce the threat of landmines and ERW to UNISFA and communities in northern areas of Abyei and the SDBZ.
- Increasing the awareness of UNISFA staff on the threat from mines and ERW is an important element of UNMAS's programme. In December, UNMAS provided induction briefings to 20 new UNISFA peacekeepers and Military Observers (MIOBs). The briefings provided an overview of UNMAS and its organisational mandate, UNMAS operations in UNISFA, and basic landmine/ERW awareness messages.



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*Training Sudanese deminers for MTT#2 in Kadugli*

# Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) monitoring teams are comprised of five elements: National Monitors from Sudan and South Sudan, UNISFA MILOBs, Force Protection and UNMAS. UNMAS will supply Patrol Support Teams (PST) consisting of MECHM's CASSPIR mine-protected vehicles and trained crews with limited EOD capability. The JBVMM teams will function within the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, with sector headquarters in Kadugli, Buram (Sudan), and Gok Machar and Malakal in South Sudan. Major activities conducted by UNMAS and its implementing partners in December 2013 are summarized as follows:

- UNISFA mine action activities in 2013-14 include route verification and clearance by the UNMAS implementing partner, MECHM. UNMAS has issued 17 tasks to MECHM for route survey, verification, and clearance in support of the JBVMM in Sector 1 and in the Abyei Administrative Area. The total for the taskings represents more than 435 km of priority routes for the season.
- MECHM's field operations have gotten underway with the deployment of equipment and teams to the JBVMM Sector #1 area. They began survey and verification on a route task between Gok Machar and Abyei to address potential threats from landmines and ERW to UNISFA, local communities and humanitarian workers. During the course of operations this season, the Teams have surveyed 117 km of the route and conducted verification on 10 km. The Teams also conducted four explosive ordnance disposal "spot tasks", and removed dangerous items of ERW.



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*Deployment of MECHM's Casspir MPVs from Juba to Wedweil*

had to be suspended on 22 December until the end of the month. Survey and clearance operations will recommence as soon as security conditions permit.

- Two PSTs remain deployed in light vehicles to JBVMM Sector Headquarters - one in Kadugli (Sector 2) and one in Gok Machar. The Teams are tasked to provide emergency mine action response in their specific UN bases and immediate surroundings.
- Training for the PSTs continues to be a central element of the project as a result of delays in initiating JBVMM ground patrols in the SDBZ. During December, all PSTs conducted training activities; and the annual refresher training and accreditation for PST Relief Teams 1 and 2 was conducted. By December 2013, all PSTs are now accredited for mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal operations.
- UNMAS deployed a full-time Operations/Quality Assurance Officer to the JBVMM Sector 1 Headquarters in early December, ensuring dedicated technical support to JBVMM operations in the western sector.



*Training for Patrol Support Team deminers*

- The outbreak of fighting in South Sudan, however, has had a direct impact on MECHM operations in Sector 1. As a result of insecurity in the area, MECHM operations

**\* IF YOU SEE AN ITEM OF CONCERN, DO NOT TOUCH IT. CONTACT UNMAS IMMEDIATELY.**