



Manual Mine Clearance Training



UNMAS

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)

JANUARY 2014 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 mines in the Abyei Area and Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and to contribute to supporting the protection of civilians. Field operations have been progressing well in January in all locations; and training and accreditation for implementing partners continued. Major activities conducted by UNMAS and its implementing partners are summarized as follows:

- The operational deployment of Multi-Task Team #1 from UNMAS' implementing partner, The Development Initiative (TDI), was well underway and the Team continued to reaffirm the trust of the local communities. The team continued to identify explosive remnants of war (ERW) which were removed for the safety of UNISFA personnel, humanitarian actors, local communities, and IDPs. In January, TDI conducted General Mine Action Assessments (GMAA) in 14 villages and four zones within Abyei town. The Team recovered and destroyed 10 ERW. In addition to GMAA tasks, the Field Supervisor conducted a risk awareness session on 10 January for 27 employees of the Antinsa Construction Company who is doing construction for UNISFA on the new airstrip in Antony.



Training on manual mine clearance for Sudanese deminers

The integration of Sudanese national deminers, which was carried out at the request of the Government of Sudan, was progressing well. During January, a comprehensive training programme including demining skills and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) training was conducted in Kadugli for the Sudanese deminers who were recruited in December 2013. Upon completion of the course and formal accreditation, the deminers will be integrated in Multi-Task Team #2, which will conduct operations to reduce the threat of mines and ERW to communities and UNISFA in northern areas of Abyei and Sudanese areas within the JBVMM area of operations. Accreditation for MTT 2 in manual mine clearance and non-technical survey (NTS) has been completed and it is expected that the Team will undergo further accreditation for additional technical tasks in mid-February.

- Increasing the awareness of UNISFA staff on the threat from mines and ERW is an important element of UNMAS's programme in Abyei. During the reporting period, UNMAS staff provided induction briefings to 15 new UNISFA peacekeepers and Military Observers (MILOBs). 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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MRE sensitization for local villagers and children in Abyei

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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 MECHEM's CASSPIR mine-protected vehicles and trained crews with mine/ERW clearance 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 January 2014 are summarized as follows:

- UNISFA mine action activities in 2013-14 include Route Verification and Clearance (RVC) by the UNMAS implementing partner, MECHEM. Despite continued conflict in South Sudan, MECHEM was able to resume field operations in the Gok Machar area on 5 January. To address potential threats from landmines and ERW to UNISFA, local communities and humanitarian workers, the Teams have been conducting route survey, verification and clearance of a priority route which links the JBVMM Sector 1 Headquarters in Gok Machar with Mission Headquarters in Abyei. During January, MECHEM completed 107.2 km of route verification, 18 km of route survey, manual mine clearance of 800m², surveys with four villages, three EOD spot tasks; and removed five ERW. Upon receipt of their Sudanese visas, MECHEM will move to Abyei and Kadugli to continue training and operations.
- The support to the JBVMM continued with two Patrol Support Teams (PST) being deployed in light vehicles to JBVMM Sector Headquarters - one in Kadugli (Sector 2) and one in Gok Machar (Sector 1). The Teams are tasked to provide emergency mine action response in their specific UN bases and immediate surroundings.
- Two PSTs were deployed to Abyei in order to reduce the number of non-essential personnel in Juba in response to the dangerous security situation. The teams were assigned five GMAA tasks in the Abyei Administrative Area, which provided additional resources in support of Mission priorities. During the month, the teams completed GMAA in six villages, and removed one ERW.
- Accreditation activities for the MECHEM Mine Detection Dog (MDD) teams continued in January. Two MDD teams successfully completed the process. Due to recent security restrictions in Juba, the additional training and accreditation of the MDD teams were delayed. The process will be completed in February.
- Training continued to be a central element of the project as a result of the continued delay by the parties in initiating JBVMM ground patrols in the SDBZ. During January, all PSTs conducted training activities, with the primary focus on battle area clearance (BAC). In addition, the teams were also trained on manual mine clearance, NTS, GMAA, basic life support, casualty evacuation, detonation under a mine roller system, Casspir driver training, JBVMM Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and patrol drills, and global position systems. All PSTs are accredited for mine clearance and EOD operations. PSTs 1 and 4 are accredited for BAC.



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Accreditation for Mine Detection Dog Team



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Accreditation for JBVMM PST on manual mine clearance

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Explosive Discovered in Abyei Market Safely Removed

Since recommencing operations in December 2013, the UNMAS Multi-Task Team has been working on general mine action assessments and explosive ordnance disposal "spot" tasks in the Abyei Administrative Area. The tasks, conducted by UNMAS' implementing partner, The Development Initiative, have been successful thanks to the team's ability to gain the trust of local communities and the high level of commitment of the team. The story below is a clear example of the close interaction the teams have with local communities and the important impact UNISFA has in reducing the threat to communities and their livelihoods.



The 60mm mortar found by the team

On 8 February, a TDI's deminer from the Abyei area informed his Team Leader about a report of a possible explosive threat in the vicinity of Abyei market. The Team Leader quickly alerted the team to prepare for deployment. An explosive device would pose a serious threat to many local villagers in the market and there was no time to waste. The team quickly deployed to the market to investigate the report. Based on information provided by a villager from Abyei Zone 6, the team conducted an investigation and identified a 60mm high explosive mortar in the living compound of one of the villagers. The mortar was inspected by the TDI experts and was deemed safe for trained personnel to move. The team removed the dangerous mortar from the scene for destruction.

Prior to departing, the team gathered the local community members and conducted a risk education briefing. The community was advised how to react to any future occurrences when they discover an item they do not recognize. The community found the briefing very useful for their safety as they are now aware of how to safely mark and report any suspicious item they discover.



Risk education briefing to local community members by TDI team