

# **UNMAS IRAQ**

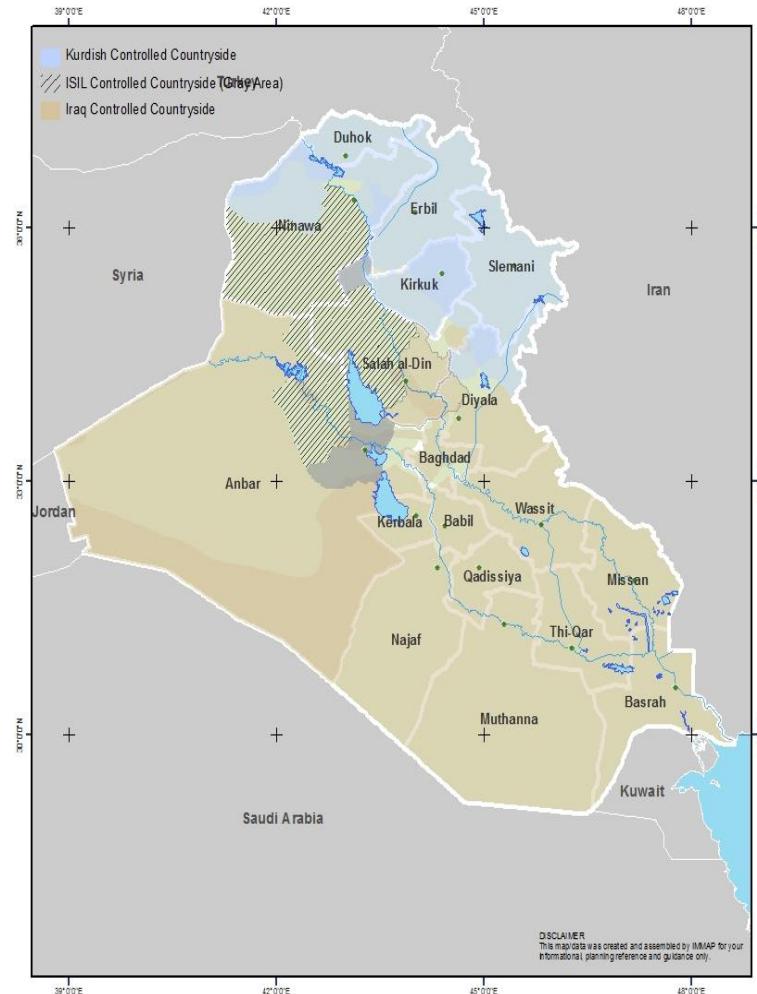
## **Presentation for the Mine Action Support Group**

Imad Abdul Baki, Programme Manager

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# Context

- Extensive conflict involving Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), Kurdish forces (Peshmerga) and the group called Daesh
- Displacement of 3.3 million people since January 2014
- Access restrictions for the stabilisation and humanitarian interventions.
- **Significant contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW) including improvised explosive devices (IEDs)**
- Extensive IED use in urban areas, including inside buildings targeting returnees.
- Extent and impact of contamination is unknown



# The IED Problem



Improvised pressure plate switches used in improvised landmines and an area contaminated with hidden IEDs (much like “minefields”) (location: South of Rabiaa)

# The IED Problem



A Kurdistan Security Force officer shows IED components with an improvised pressure plate-switch, ordnance and improvised main charges using home made explosives, many are found in built up areas

# The IED Problem



Left: typical armoured Daesh large vehicle-borne IED. Estimated to be carrying 1-1.5 tonnes of high explosive and Right: Various Daesh under vehicle booby trap designs with Victim Operated, Command and Time switches

# UNMAS in Iraq

At the request of the UN SRSG and DSRSG/HC/RC for Iraq and the Iraqi Authorities, UNMAS deployed to Iraq in June 2015 to assess the scale of newly identified explosive threats, including IEDs, in areas re-taken from Daesh.

In June 2015 UNMAS established offices in Baghdad and Erbil.

## UNMAS Activities:

- Train/advise/mentor civilian EOD and IED clearance teams in Baghdad and Erbil
- Conduct comprehensive threat assessments in re-taken areas
- Develop and enhance national capacities in IED Defeat, mitigation and clearance supported by international technical experts where needed
- Assist national authorities to manage/coordinate a response to IEDs and IED threat mitigation policies/procedures.
- Support the voluntary return of internally displaced persons
- Facilitate **stabilization, humanitarian response and early recovery.**

# Challenges

- Evolving humanitarian crisis in ‘re-taken’ areas
- Complex political-security, access, and infrastructure restrictions
- National/UN assistance efforts cannot proceed without comprehensive response to address IED problem
- High risk/ “barely permissible” environment: active conflict and the continued presence of Daesh
- Not a traditional humanitarian mine action context: the concept of stabilization in the context of addressing IED in re-taken areas is new

# Challenges

- UN/international partners under immense political pressure to deliver humanitarian action/stabilisation/reconciliation in re-taken areas
- Scale of the contamination problem in re-taken areas is “massive”
- Current UNMAS capacity and long-term resources: significant additional funding required to conduct clearance in newly recovered areas
- **Disproportionate donor focus on an “immediate” response: multi-year support will be needed to consolidate any emergency response**

# The way forward

**Initial UNMAS assessments of the IED threat and of available National Capacities have enabled a ‘bespoke’ training and mentoring package to be developed in coordination with other partners:**

- Funding secured for initial training/mentoring of national/regional authorities in IEDD
- **THANK YOU** to the governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, and the European Union (External Action Service).

**Multi-year funding and political support will be required to effectively address the heavy contamination:**

- International focus on ‘recently liberated’ areas is extremely high
- Ramadi: large volumes of victim operated IEDs and additional sophisticated remote controlled IEDs expected
- No way to deal with this except through scale of survey/clearance capacity: very little exists right now
- Costs anticipated to be high: threat-specific detection and disposal equipment is needed

# The way forward

**Large-scale emergency clearance response capacity required in areas recovered from Daesh**

- Support sustainability and ‘mentor’ deployment into the re-taken areas following training
- Emergency clearance through commercially contracted companies

**UNMAS Iraq is currently developing concepts, building on the existing training/mentoring work, to provide targeted clearance responses in re-taken areas, including Ramadi**

**Political support exists: financial support has yet to catch up – clearing re-taken areas in Iraq is a multi-year endeavour**