

## UNITED NATIONS FIGHT AGAINST THREATS REPRESENTED BY UNEXPLODED AMMUNITION

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**Abstract:** *The redefinition of the new world order is based on different political, social and economic visions that lead to conflict and ethnic or religious tensions in different parts of the world. The vision of the United Nations among others is to create a world without mines; a world in which ground-emplaced mines and explosive remnants of war do not threaten civilians. Therefore, UN aims to accomplish this specific vision materialized in the strategic plan of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).*

**Keywords:** *UNMAS; strategic plan; UN; explosive ammunition security.*

### Introduction

Since its inception on October 24, 1945, and to this day, the United Nations has the mission of ensuring world peace, respect for human rights and international law and cooperation.

Due to these needs, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) was established in 1997 with the mission of a world without mines, in which civilians are not threatened by the explosive remnants of war.

A current example is unfortunately the war in Ukraine in which huge amounts of explosive ammunition are used, many of which remain unexploded and pose new dangers for the future of this country for the security of civil society. With the end of this war, a new UNMAS mission will be needed to form a state-level education to defend the civilian population against the harmful actions and explosive remnants of war. There are currently 19 UNMAS missions worldwide, including the Abyei, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Colombia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Western Sahara missions that aim to build national civilian protection capabilities against explosive remnants of war.

The general objective of our article is to identify the ability and capacity of UNMAS to lead, coordinate, and implement projects and programs to mitigate the threats posed by the unexploded ammunition, namely landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) following armed conflicts.

This objective is based on a set of specific research questions. *First*, we wondered what actions were taken. *Second*, we wondered how these missions are funded and by whom. *Third*, we wondered what the effects of these missions are. *Fourth*, we focused on the synthesis of UNMAS reports between 2018 and 2020.

The research serving as the basis of this article was conducted through a non-experimental *research methodology*, using longitudinal and cross-sectional elements. We also used analytical research methods, both non-interactive and non-comparative. The qualitative-quantitative approach required the choice of analytical methods as well as prospective methods.

## United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UN Secretary-General showed that threat of unexploded ammunition is a multifaceted problem highlighted in the *2030 Agenda* which is the heart of continuing UN reforms.

The role of mine action services is unique in creating links between the humanitarian, development and peace fields and it is also used as motivation for promoting peacekeeping and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals settled in the 2030 Agenda.

The establishment of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) was made by the United Nations General Assembly to provide a coordination of the organization’s vision – *a world without mines*, thus, a world in which ground-emplaced mines and explosive remnants of war do not threaten civilians.

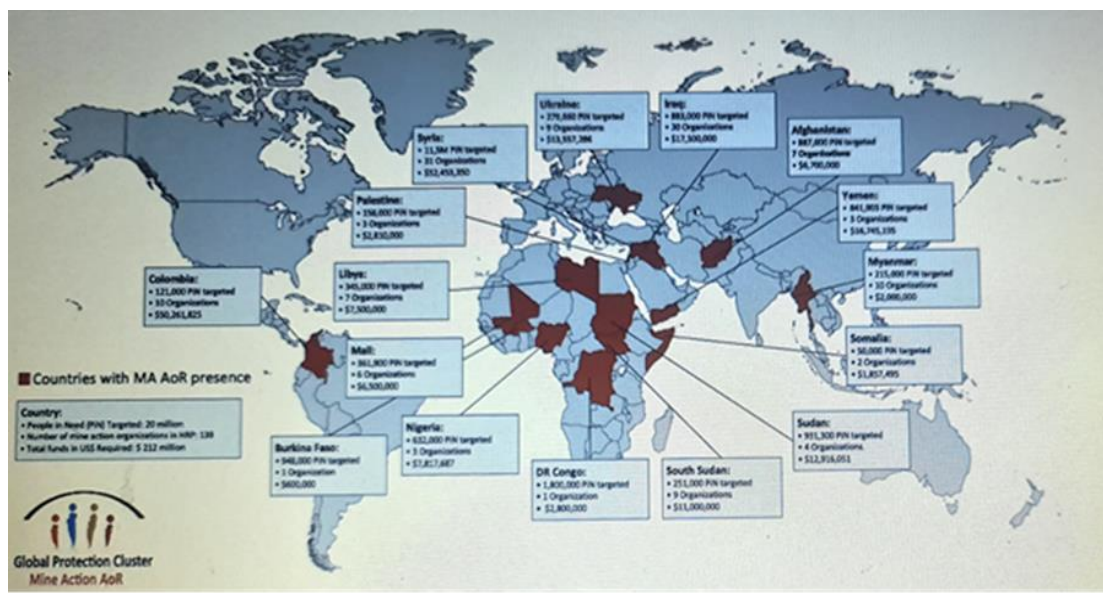
UNMAS runs under the congressional mandates of the UN, associated to the General Assembly and the Security Council, representing a specialized service of the organization situated in the Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

UNMAS was established as an integral component of the peace operations activities, including specific political missions and movements, and peacekeeping. It is also a responsibility of UNMAS to respond to distinct demands for support from the entitled representative of an afflicted country or the UN Secretary-General. The main responsibilities and capabilities of this service are represented by the evolution of standards, principles, and rules in the ammunitions’ field, as well as the management of demining operations. Also, topography, mapping, and marking are part of the action of demining, but it also includes the detection and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) and to alleviate the risks posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

A global progress has been seen in the efforts to address the threats represented by exploding ammunition (See Figure no. 1).

As a result of long-term wars, significant amounts of unexploded ordnance remain, affecting the territory where they took place and posing major dangers to the uninformed population and the need for UNMAS intervention.

Map of actions in the humanitarian response plan in 2020 (VLADU Figure no.1)



(UNMAS 2020)

[https://unmas.org/sites/default/files/unmas\\_annual\\_report\\_2020.pdf](https://unmas.org/sites/default/files/unmas_annual_report_2020.pdf), accessed on 15.05.2022.

Given the necessity situation, the UNMAS Strategic Plan lasting between 2019 and 2023 has been created as a responsible body and guidance report for the department. UNMAS provides the states that are members, the system of the United Nations and its captainship and also operations in general, with a candid competence and experience. These have been achieved through the humanitarian, development, peace and peacebuilding aid offered to the affected countries, and through participating and contributing to the diplomatic and treaty law cases.

As a result of the demining operations, the roads are open and the population and farmers can resume their activities safely. Children go to school without fear, and the displaced people return to their homes without explosive ammunition. As a result of these actions, water wells and local facilities are accessible again, peacekeeping forces can be deployed safely, and humanitarian aid is distributed where it is most needed.

UNMAS conducts arms and ammunition management activities that consist of technical assistance to help destroy stockpiles, establish well-managed conventional ammunition warehouses to avoid a risk to public safety, a risk to state security. In parallel, the organization is also in charge of educational campaigns which present the reduction of risks, support survivors of an accident involving explosive artillery and train governments on a local and national level on how to solve the issue by themselves. UNMAS is responsible of reducing human suffering which continues for a long period of time after the end of the fight.

UNMAS, occupying the role of the global coordinator in demining actions, expects an excellent use of resources, gives a great importance to and marks services, and provides policy advice and law in the system of the UN and it also assures a gender perspective around its activities and a speedy progress in the direction of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UNMAS Strategic Plan 2019-2023 was implemented due to its need, as the threats being represented by the unexploded ammunitions is one of the multidimensional challenges highlighted in the UN 2030 Agenda.

### **UNMAS Strategic Plan lasting between 2019 and 2023**

The accomplishment of the missions described in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development need to be free of ground-emplaced mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and explosive gear that is improvised. It is the right of every person to live safely and to be confident that he can take the next step with no danger.

The strategic plan has an objective to augment the addition of UNMAS in the application of the UN Mine Action Strategy lasting between 2019 and 2023 and the UN vision of a world without land mines, explosive remains of war and explosive dispositive that is improvised, including cluster armament (UNMAS, 2019, p. 1).

UNMAS, like any specialized UN service, has a mandate, mission and vision of “a society without the threat of mines, explosive remains of war that includes cluster armament and explosive gear that is improvised, in which people and communities live in an environment that is safe and helpful, oriented towards the development of peace and sustainability, in which no man is left behind, in which the human rights and the needs of victims are being responded to and met and in which all individuals are fully integrated and considered as equal members of their civilizations”. (United Nation 2015)

It also aims to achieve strategic results. Between 2019 and 2023, the strategic results pursued are the following five: 1- the promotion of consistent ways to increase the impact of the demining domain; 2 to 4 – their implementation in the areas of insurance against dangers and repercussions of explosive artillery; assistance and empowerment of the people who have survived, the family members and the touched communities; interstate lead and management

of demining; 5 – implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic Plan. (United Nations 2018)

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (M&E) will be used to measure the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The focal point of the M&E structure framework is on the provisional results of the UNMAS Strategic Plan of UNMAS. It is also important to monitor the progress made towards important results. The most recent monitoring will be carried out along with the monitoring of the UN Mine Action Strategy lasting between 2019 and 2023. The importance of conducting reference socio-economic surveys of mine action has an impact on the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The development of the UNMAS activity is possible due to the funding of different contributors.

It would not be possible to carry out all these activities without financial support. That is why I believe it is important to mention the financing methods of UNMAS. Funding is provided by the General Assembly for peacekeeping missions and special political missions. The rest of the activities are carried out from extra-budgetary funds, multi-donor trust funds, the Central Emergency Aid Fund and the private sector. Now more than ever the world's powerful countries are against wars and funding these missions. The contributions of these countries are reflected in the charts below. (UNMAS 2020)

A comparison of the 2018-2020 reports of UNMAS led to the following summaries of the contributing countries (Figure no. 2).



Having understood the role and importance of these missions, which prevent the prolongation of war and during peacetime the civilian casualties, represented mostly by children and young people, generated by explosive munitions and explosive remnants of war, the countries in the table below have made the following donations in the period 2019-2020 worth USD 90.8 million:

The United Kingdom stands out with a contribution of 30.3 million USD; Denmark with \$ 15.5 million and Australia with \$ 12.5 million.

UNMAS contributing countries (VLADU Figure nr. 3)

Year	Country	2019	2020
	Australia	7,8	4,7
	Belgium	2,2	2,4
	Canada	2,5	3,6
	Korea	1,6	



Denmark	10,6	4,9
Germany	4,5	9,7
Italy	2,7	2,7
Holland	4,6	5,9
UK	17,3	13,0
USA		10,1

(UNMAS 2019)

Top three countries with UNMAS program beneficiaries in the analysis period (USD million) (VLADU Figure nr. 4).

<b>Beneficiary countries</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>103,5</b>	<b>111,6</b>	<b>60,1</b>
Afghanistan	21,7	15,7	7,8
Irak	58,4	63,5	20,8
Syria	7,4		9,2
Sudan		13,6	

(UNMAS 2020)

We note that the most important beneficiary is Iraq, which received \$ 142.7 million in 2018-2020 for the disposal of explosive remnants of war (ERW), improvised explosive devices (IED), improvised explosive devices operated by the victim (VOIED) managing to eliminate 2257 such remnants in a single month.

Another beneficiary, for which \$ 45.2 million has been allocated for 2018-2020, is Afghanistan. Official reports show the high number of dead and wounded, about 41,686, on average 108 civilians were affected monthly by unexploded minesweepers during wars and by explosive remnants of war

These funds were used to conduct a nationwide survey to reflect the level of contamination and the existence of other humanitarian needs. The result highlighted that 25% of the country's surface is contaminated with explosive hazards such as IM and ERW and led to the implementation of the Humanitarian Response Plan. The increase of the clean-up capacity of abandoned makeshift mines (AIM) at the national level has been achieved by training civilian personnel through NGOs to detect and clean makeshift mines and other types of explosive hazards. Support efforts to integrate equality and diversity into mine action. (UNMAS 2022).

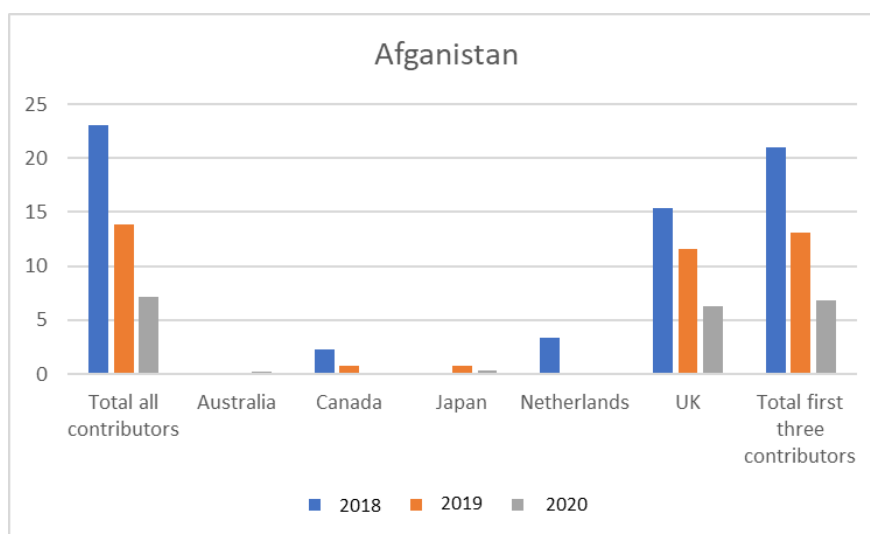
Of the funds amounting to \$ 16.6 million, Syria conducted training sessions for about 2 million people, facilitated education by raising awareness of the risk of explosive munitions, training team leaders, some of the dangerous areas were marked, deforestation and cleaning works were carried out restoring safe access areas to the civil society.

Details with the first three contributing countries to UNMAS in the period 2018 - 2020, for the first three beneficiaries (million USD) (VLADU Figure no. 5)

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Total all contributors</b>	<b>23,1</b>	<b>13,8</b>	<b>7,1</b>
Australia			0,25
Canada	2,25	0,74	

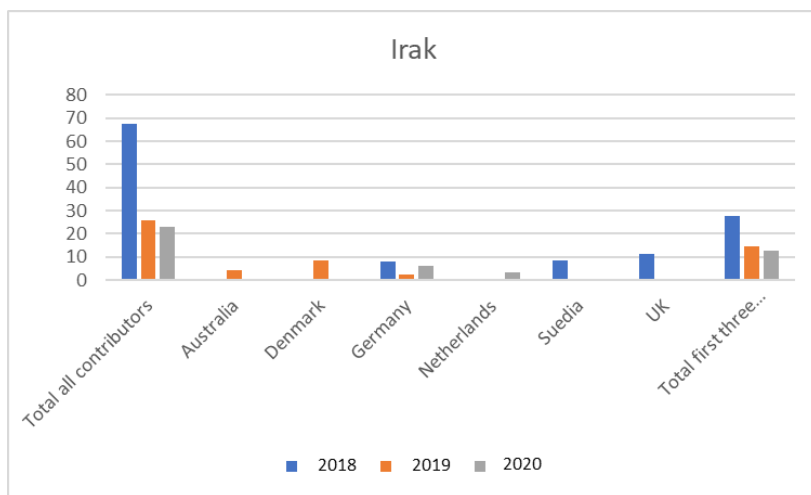
Japan		0,8	0,29
Holland	3,4		
UK	15,4	11,6	6,3
<b>Total first three contributors</b>	<b>21,05</b>	<b>13,14</b>	<b>6,84</b>
<b>Irak</b>			
<b>Total all contributors</b>	<b>67,5</b>	<b>25,9</b>	<b>23,2</b>
Australia		4,3	
Denmark		8,3	
Germany	8,0	2,2	6,2
Holland			3,2
Sweden	8,3		
UK	11,4		3,5
<b>Total first three contributors</b>	<b>27,7</b>	<b>14,8</b>	<b>12,9</b>
<b>Syria</b>			
<b>Total all contributors</b>	<b>6,1</b>	<b>9,0</b>	<b>8,2</b>
Australia	3,0	2,8	1,9
Germany	1,8	1,7	1,8
Japan	1,3	1,4	
USA			1,5
<b>Total first three contributors</b>	<b>6,1</b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>5,0</b>

For this table we also made the graphs below for a better understanding.



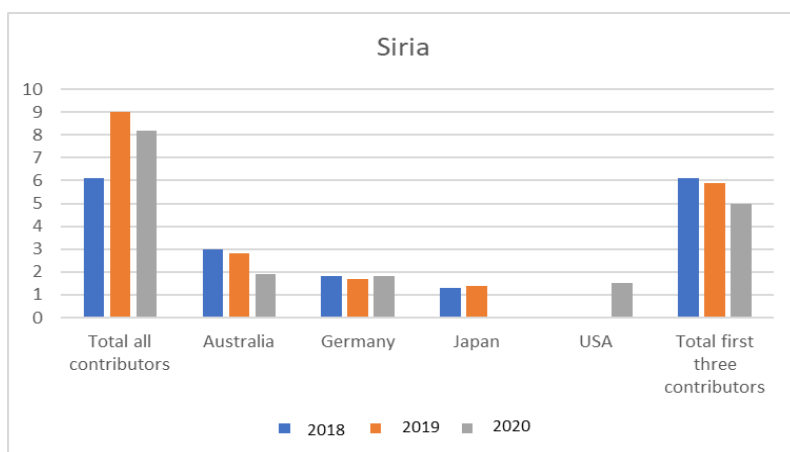
(VLADU Figure no. 6)

In the case of Afghanistan, the first contributor in the three years allotted was the United Kingdom. The amount represented two thirds of the total budget of contributors in 2018, and in 2019 and 2020, the contribution will be 85% of the budget of contributors. In 2018, the second and third contributor amounted to almost 25%. In 2019, the two contributors amounted to 11% and in 2020 the two contributors after the UK represent 7.6%.



(VLADU Figure no. 7)

For Iraq, the situation in 2018 shows that the UK is also the first contributor with a percentage of 17%, and the other two amount to 24%. In 2019 Denmark is the first contributor with 32%. The second and third contributors represent 25%. In 2020, Germany is the first contributor with 27% and the other two representing 29%.



(VLADU Figure no. 8)

In the case of Syria, the first contributor in 2018 was Australia with 49% and the other two with 51%. In 2019, the situation shows that Australia is the first contributor with 31% followed by the other two with 34%. In 2020, Australia is the main contributor with 23% followed by the other two with 40%.

We note that Australia is the main contributor for the whole period 2018-2020.

Programs and activities carried out by UNMAS in figures for the period 2018 – 2020 (VLADU Figure no. 9)

		2018	2019	2020
<b>Number Programs</b>		19	18	19
<b>Destruction</b>	<b>Explosive debris</b>	105036	77000	71000
	<b>Landmines</b>	2471	5000	9000
	<b>IEDs</b>	1846	2000	400
<b>Cleanup</b>	<b>Surfaces</b>	144 km <sup>2</sup>	320 km <sup>2</sup>	60 km <sup>2</sup>
	<b>Roads</b>	3000 km	8000 km	1900 km
<b>Built warehouses</b>		25	113	111

<b>Training affected people explosive risks</b>	2090000	2800000	1700000
<b>Training specialized staff</b>	4100	3000	24000
<b>Assisted victims</b>	1900	2000	3000

Following the numerous UNMAS missions, during the two years, 2018-2020, 253,036 explosive debris, 16,471 landmines and 4,246 IEDs were collected, clearing an area of 526 m<sup>2</sup> and 12,900 km of road. 249 warehouses were built and 6,590,000 people impacted by the explosive risk were trained, as well as 31,100 specialized personnel.

### Conclusions

The general objective of the article based on the set of specific research questions was achieved as shown in the summary tables made following the analysis of official data mentioned in UNMAS reports, prepared for the objective reality found in various missions.

Thus, we can say that UNMAS missions are a real success due to the projects of destruction, cleaning or storage of explosive debris, landmines, IEDs as well as training programs for civilians and specialized personnel in order to prevent potential tragic situations that may occur.

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