

1 AUGUST 2009

United Nations Mine Action Team Gaza Office



Mine Action update for Gaza



The United Nations Mine Action Team – Gaza Office (UNMAT-GO) was established in January 2009 to provide a rapid response towards assessing and neutralizing the threat of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO): coordinating Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, providing UXO safety training for humanitarian workers and raising awareness amongst the local population. The UNMAT-GO is composed of United Nations, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and Global Medic personnel.

Israeli authorities allowed the entry of specialist EOD equipment into Gaza on the 3rd July which allowed UNMAT EOD Teams to locate UXO. The entry of this equipment has enhanced the UNMAT EOD teams ability to conduct Mine Action operations more safely and effectively

UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION TEAM—OBJECTIVES

1. Providing freedom from fear: minimizing the threat of death or injury caused by UXO to those living and working in Gaza; and,
2. Enhancing freedom from want: supporting rubble removal, reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing, infrastructure, agricultural land and livelihoods in line with the Palestinian National Authority Early Recovery & Reconstruction Plan 2009-2010 (2nd March 2009) and UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009).



Mines Advisory Group

UNMAT WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING DONORS FOR SUPPORT TO MINE ACTION IN GAZA



British-based NGO Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has been the key implementing partner for UNMAT since the 23rd January 2009. MAG currently has 5 EOD teams working within Gaza to dispose of UXO in support of Early Recovery and rubble removal efforts currently being conducted by UNDP, UNRWA, Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). MAG is also conducting UXO safety awareness briefings for UN agencies and NGOs, promoting safe behavior for those working in Gaza as well as specific safety awareness training for contractors and personnel involved in rubble removal.

- European Commission
- United Kingdom Department for International Development
- Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- The Swedish International Development Agency
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs





UXO Safety Awareness Training



Can you spot the Anti-Tank mine in the rubble below?



What is UXO? (Unexploded Ordnance)

UXO by definition has been prepared for use, and fired, dropped, launched or projected, but remains unexploded. It is often sensitive to movement and may explode when touched or otherwise disturbed. UNMAT EOD teams work to remove and destroy these items as requested and permitted by the authorities, UN agencies and NGOs, so they do not continue to pose a threat to the civilian population in Gaza.

Mines Advisory Group have been conducting UXO safety awareness training on behalf of UNMAT. This training has been directed at UN, NGO & INGO staff initially to assist them in reducing the risk to themselves while conducting activities in the field. The MAG Community Liaison Team and EOD Technicians are now conducting training for personnel directly involved in the rubble removal process. This training provides the necessary UXO awareness and "actions on" skills when they uncover UXO within the rubble. Site Managers receive additional training to allow them to assess the best options for planning their rubble removal activities on sites assessed as "Medium" & "High" risk of containing UXO. Site Managers will also receive specific instructions on what to do when an item of UXO is located and the immediate safety precautions to be taken to prevent injury to his personnel on site.

UXO Safety Awareness Training sessions are vital to ensure personnel working in the rubble removal process are safe



UXO come in a range of sizes and shapes



Home Made Rocket (HMR) located by MAG EOD Team July 2009



The most significant remaining UXO threat now lies within the ruins of collapsed and damaged buildings. UNMAT's work over the coming months will focus on support to rubble removal – the safe clearance of UXO being crucial for these projects' success. UNMAT input into the assessment and planning for such projects will be fundamental for the safe and effective rebuilding of Gaza.

Various Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) found in Gaza to date

CHALLENGES
 UNMAT is still waiting to receive approval from the Israeli Ministry of Defence and IDF to purchase and import explosives into Gaza to allow UNMAT EOD teams to destroy UXO by controlled demolitions



To date MAG EOD Teams have located 8 x M15 Anti-Tank mines within rubble of two sites currently being cleared by UNDP rubble removal contractors



The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS): The unique political and security situation in Gaza requires a well-coordinated approach between international humanitarian organizations operating in the area, and local authorities. UNMAS – under the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions – was designated the UN mine action focal point in 1997. UNMAS mobilized into Gaza on 23 January 2009 to conduct a technical assessment mission, and to establish a mine action project in response to Operation Cast Lead, and offices have since been opened in Gaza and Jerusalem. A Programme Manager, Security Officer, Support Specialist and Programme Officer now coordinate the operations of implementing partner EOD, community liaison and awareness-raising teams, and provide technical advice to UN agencies and NGOs. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) provides an in-kind operations officer and medical coordinator.

To sustain life-saving mine action operations in support of rubble removal and reconstruction, UNMAT is seeking to secure US\$4.3 million for 16 months between 1 September 2009 and 31 December 2010.

Your funding support is required for this critical component of Early Recovery and Reconstruction in Gaza

Still to be achieved:

UXO Risk Assessments:

- A further 1200 homes are to be completed for UNDP before the end of September 2009.
- Of the 914 buildings assessed to date:
 - 142 have been assessed as "High" risk.
 - 284 have been assessed as "Medium" risk.
 - 488 have been assessed as "Low" risk.

UXO Safety Training:

MAG will conduct training for 927 rubble removal workers and 21 site engineers and foremen from CHF over 36 sessions commencing August 2009.

120 rubble removal workers soon to be contracted by UNRWA will also receive UXO safety awareness training.

MAG will also conduct a further 8 Safety Awareness training sessions for farmers through out Gaza commencing August.

EOD support:

- EOD teams will continue to provide direct support to rubble removal activities conducted by UNDP, UNRWA, NRC and CHF in the event that UXO is discovered in the rubble of destroyed/damaged buildings.

United Nations Mine Action Team

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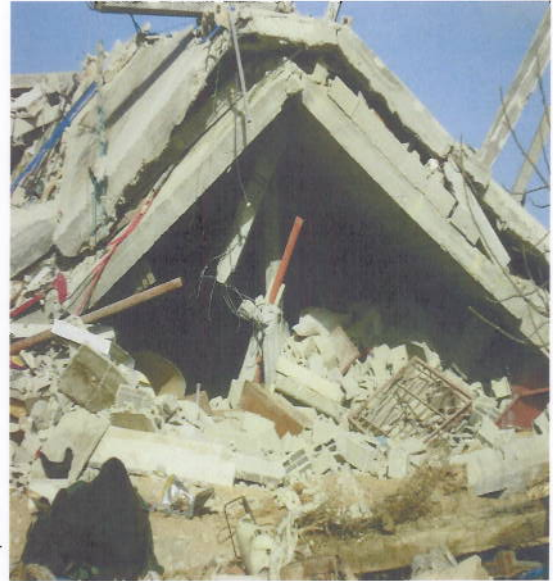


United Nations Mine Action Team
Gaza Office

UXO RISK ASSESSMENTS

MAG EOD Teams conduct UXO risk assessments in support of rubble removal activities

- 914 UXO risk assessments for UNDP, UNRWA, CHF, NRC & other Agencies have been completed to date.
- The risk assessment process is conducted to determine if the building has the potential to contain a residual UXO threat which may pose a hazard for rubble removal or reconstruction teams.
- The UXO risk assessment will further categorize the potential threat as Low, Medium or High. This assessment is based on the technical experience of the EOD Technician as well as verbal statements from eye witnesses, visual evidence located on the site, whether that be from fragmentation found, blast damage or lack of blast damage, entry holes (from ordnance that was fired into or at a specific building and where UXO entry holes are seen but no evidence of a detonation exists) and the extent of damage.
- Once the risk assessment has been completed then a written report is prepared that will be given to the client and the rubble removal contractor to advise him on the risk level and what specific precautions will need to be taken to prevent accidents during the rubble removal process.
- UNMAT Gaza will provide the following EOD support during the rubble removal process according to the risk assessment category:
 - "Low" risk sites: a EOD team will be "on call" to respond in the event any items of UXO are located on site.
 - "Medium" risk sites: a EOD team will be "on call" to respond within 1 hour in the event any items of UXO are located on site. A EOD team may cover several sites in one geographical location
 - "High" risk sites: a dedicated EOD team will be "on site" and respond immediately in the event any items of UXO is located on site, they will also conduct regular checks during the working day as the contractor or rubble removal team systematically clears the rubble.



UXO RISK ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED TO DATE

142 "High" risk sites
284 "Medium" risk sites
488 "Low" risk sites



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MINE ACTION**