



United Nations Mine Action Team
Gaza Office

UNMAT-GO would like to thank its donors for their support to mine action in Gaza in 2009

- The UN Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF)
- The European Commission;
- The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID);
- The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA);
- The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) through the HERF;
- Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP-PAPP).



Specialist detectors donated by Schonstedt enable MAG EOD teams to search beneath the ground surface and ease the search between and around the rubble.



United Nations Mine Action Team - Gaza Office



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Issue 3

MINE ACTION IN GAZA—ONE YEAR AFTER

In the immediate aftermath of Operation 'Cast Lead' and thanks to funding provided by a number of donors (see right hand site column), the United Nations Mine Action Team-Gaza Office (UNMAT-GO) was able to rapidly deploy the capacity required to provide life-saving assistance to Gazan communities throughout 2009. In December 2009, **additional emergency contributions from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID), the Government of the Netherlands and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) through UNDP have enabled UNMAT to confirm the continuation of its operations in Gaza until the end of March 2010**, while approximately USD 1 million is further required to cover the existing capacity until the end of June 2010. A review will be conducted in the first quarter of the year to determine the required capacity beyond a 3 month time frame. It is envisaged that all known residential properties destroyed and currently accessible agricultural lands and access routes will be completed in Gaza by end of 2010. The implementation of EOD clearance is primarily linked to the rubble removal process conducted by other agencies, therefore it is imperative that rubble removal is funded jointly and in collaboration with Mine Action. **Further Mine Action intervention will be required to provide EOD capacity to support rubble removal and reconstruction activities of commercial and industrial zones as well as those agricultural areas falling within the 300m buffer zone where access is currently denied.**



UNMAT/MAG EOD technician manually defusing an unexploded bomb, Gaza, 2009

At the end of "Cast Lead", Explosive remnants of war (ERW) and Unexploded ordnance (UXO) threats in destroyed buildings included Anti-Tank mines, aircraft bombs - either fuzed or unfuzed - as well as other naval, air or ground delivered ordnance. A year after its deployment, the role of the UNMAT remains crucial and widely acknowledged by all stakeholders in Gaza, with the **discovery of 334 items of UXOs and ERWs** as of 31 December 2009, of which 167 has been found in the rubble during rubble removal projects which commenced on the 7 July 2009, as well as 2,100 small arms ammunitions. Out of the total number of items found, 53 contain white phosphorus and 68 are M15 anti-tank mines.

Since March 2009, 2,052 requests for assessments on properties or sites were received by UNDP, UNRWA, ACF, NCR, CHF, CRS, the ICRC, Nama Organization, Life and Hope and Labour Resources in preparation of their rubble removal and rehabilitation of roads projects. UNMAT has now completed **1,617 risk assessments**, resulting in 36 percent of the assessed buildings categorized as having a medium to high risk of containing UXO/ERW, therefore requiring Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) support to remove ordnance buried under the rubble. In parallel, a total of **157 UXO safety briefing sessions** have been held in English and Arabic for **2,877 personnel from UN agencies, local and international NGOs, and Palestinian civilian staff** contracted by UNDP, UNRWA and CHF to minimize accidents due to mishandling of UXO by workers during rubble removal operations, as well as **927 at-risk civilians** such as farmers working in or near the buffer zone with Israel. EOD teams have been able to **respond rapidly (24/7) to the UXO threat** whether present at sites or on call, dependent upon the threat level, across the Gaza Strip. Teams also responded to information received from the general public, either by using a direct telephone link or by passing information on through the UXO safety awareness training sessions, while community liaison staff undertook work to facilitate the collection of information which led to EOD tasks.

Despite the successful implementation of the early recovery operations and ongoing emergency response by UNMAT-GO, the threat posed by anti-tank mines, UXO and ERW as a result of 'Operation Cast Lead' remains high as communities and workers in Gaza continue to be threatened daily by UXOs and ERW. Data recorded by the Ministry of Health since the end of the Operation indicates that, to date, **33 people have been injured and 10 killed as a result of UXO-related accidents in the Gaza Strip**, half of them being children.

THE UNMAT-GO

Under UNMAS coordination and management, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) deployed one EOD Technical Operations Manager and five EOD Teams in Gaza in 2009, which were supported by a medical coordinator/paramedic provided by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), as well as a paramedic Gaza provided by GlobalMedic. With the exception of minor modifications, the configuration of the UNMAT-GO will remain unchanged in 2010.



Objectives of the UNMAT-GO mission in the Gaza Strip

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 (2 March 2009) and UN Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009).

Pictures: UNDP contractors removing rubble from sites within Gaza.



A report compiled by Mohammad Abu Sal' MAG.



EOD SUPPORT TO UNDP RUBBLE REMOVAL

UNDP commenced their rubble removal project in Gaza on 7 July 2009, with systematic UNMAT-GO EOD technical support following UXO Risk Assessments of all properties to be cleared. Training has also been provided to all personnel directly involved in

the rubble removal process, ensuring that the personnel has all necessary UXO awareness and "actions on" skills when they uncover UXO within the rubble.

Moreover, site Managers contracted by UNDP have received 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, as well as 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.

Since the commencement of UNDP rubble removal on 7 July 2009, 167 items have been uncovered, made safe and removed. With the exception of some properties located in the buffer zone which are inaccessible for the moment, all planned risk assessments with UNDP for the year 2009 have now been completed, while EOD support to UNDP rubble removal continues.

"I have worked on many sites around the UK and other parts of the world, where people have had a lot more than the average Palestinian in Gaza, and not even been offered a glass of water. The local people are the most hospitable people I have ever met and I find it to be a pretty humbling affair".

Iain McCulloch/MAG EOD Technician, 11 November 2009, Gaza

STORY OF MR NASSER

Until Operation "Cast Lead", Mr Nasser, his wife, their five sons and their families were living in a three story house in quiet neighborhood

of Jabalyia, which he built after working in Israel for most of his life. In early January, the whole family was forced to leave the



neighborhood which was heavily shelled by the IDF. After the end of the military offensive on Gaza, the family came back to their house, only to find it in ruins, totally demolished, making them homeless. At the request of UNDP,

MAG conducted a risk assessment on 5 July 2009 and classified the house as having a "High risk" of containing UXOs. Indeed, when the rubble was removed by UNDP contracted teams on 27 October, UNMAT-GO EOD Teams found two unexploded anti-tank mines and safely removed them. In the meantime, Mr Nasser has built a shelter nearby in the property, to ensure that his family has a roof until crossings open and construction materials enter Gaza, and compensation will be granted, to allow him to rebuild his house.

RAFAH FOOTBALL STADIUM

One of the first sites that was assessed by UNMAT-GO in the Gaza Strip in March 2009 was the Rafah Football Stadium. On 21 March, MAG Technical Field Manager Mr Kenneth Dunn was tasked to visit the site by the Norwegian Refugee Council and produce a report assessing the damage and which risk remained from any UXO, accompanied by Mr. Ali Abu Mater, the principle engineer for reconstruction in the Rafah municipality, and the stadium Manager Mr. Abdel Qader. On the morning of 14 January 2009, a large explosion on the site destroyed the terraced seating and sports facilities of the stadium. A full survey of the site by Mr Dunn revealed that an Mk 84 (2000lb) aircraft bomb had penetrated through the metal roofing and exploded at ground level in the centre section of the terracing. This had been verified by the recovery of large metal fragmentation from the bomb casing. Opposite the stadium were two UNRWA schools, the nearest being the Rafah Elementary "B" Boys School which suffered minor damage to a security wall and windows. The Football pitch,

whilst not damaged directly, was made unusable due to metal fragments and other debris from the explosion contaminating the playing surface. The loss of this facility has deprived six local football teams - Rafah Youth Club, The Rafah Services Club (UNRWA), Rafah Association Club, The Union Club, The Al Qudasea Club and the Tel Al Sulotan Camp Club - from either training or playing fixtures. Football in Gaza, like most places throughout the world, is keenly played and supported.

Shortly after the assessment by MAG teams, the rubble was safely removed as part of an NRC project. While the destroyed section of Stadium terracing has been removed, returning the playing surface to a fit condition will take longer due to lack of equipments, the need of replacement of unavailable turf and the need to remove metal fragments in the playing surface.

The maintenance of the grass will be restricted due to lack of grass cutter and roller. It is essential that such a significant facility for the municipality be supported by donors, to allow football to once again be played and the sounds of the fans to echo around Rafah.



A report compiled by Kenneth Dunn/MAG Technical Field Manager

Top picture: Rafah Stadium on 21 March 2009

Below picture: Rafah stadium on 8 October 2009.

Achievements to date

• UXO Risk Assessments:

- 1,617 buildings assessed to date (i.e., 876,596 m²) out of 2,052 requests:
- 191 'High' risk, 397 'Medium' risk and 1,029 'Low' risk.
- benefiting 57,322 people.

• UXO Located by EOD Teams:

- 334 items of UXO/ ERW, Including 53 white phosphorus items and 68 anti-tank mines;
- 2,100 small arms ammunition.

• UXO Safety Awareness Training:

- 157 training sessions for 3,804 persons (3,235 males and 569 females):
- 68 General UXO Safety briefings;
- 5 UXO Training of Trainers;
- 74 Level I Rubble Removal;
- 10 Level 2&3 Rubble Removal.

A report compiled by Kenneth Dunn/MAG Technical Field Manager

EC VISIT TO AL SARAYA PRISON COMPOUND

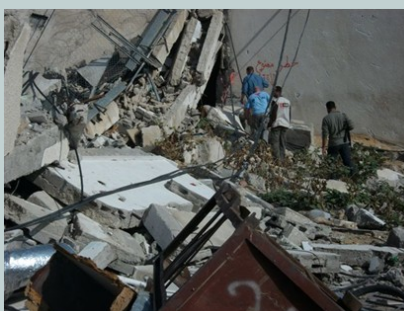
On 12 November 2009, Mr. Denys Bart, Task Manager - Security Sector Reform/Instrument for Stability, of the European Commission Technical Assistance Office (ECTAO) in the oPt, visited UNMAT-GO programme in Gaza, partly funded by the European Commission. Accompanied by Mr. Mark Russell (MAG Technical Operations Manager Gaza) and Mr Kenneth Dunn (MAG Technical Field Manager), he visited the Al Saraya prison compound, which was reportedly targeted during Operation "Cast Lead" by approximately 10 Aircraft bombs. Evidence of large impact craters can be seen throughout the compound; the prison administrative buildings were extensively damaged whilst the actual Prison cell block only

received collateral damage and was not specifically targeted.

Following an assessment of the prison on 30 June 2009 to determine the risk of UXO remaining on the site, either buried in the ground or within the rubble, UNMAT teams assessed it as a HIGH risk. Three locations were identified where aircraft bombs had penetrated through the roof and subsequent different floor levels before impacting on the ground, while no evidence of detonation was visible. These three locations will require to be investigated prior to the compound being declared safe and clear of rubble.

UNDP started clearing the rubble of the compound in mid-July, with MAG's presence to respond rapidly to any concern on the high risk site. Rubble

removal operations continued throughout July and August.



خطر! ابتعد!
Danger! Keep Out!



مناطق ملغومة
UXO Hazard

MEDICAL & PARAMEDICAL SUPPORT TO UNMAT-GO IN THE FIELD

Given the high danger and great risk involved in works dealing with UXO, a qualified Paramedic is always required on site during EOD operations for a rapid response, should an accident occur. The challenges faced by the institutions providing medical and paramedical care in Gaza are numerous. Although there are many ambulance units in Gaza, many are not operational and spare parts are not available due to the closure of Gaza. At any given time, there is a shortage of available ambulances for use in support to EOD operations. The recurring lack of fuel remains an obstacle. Moreover, ten ambulances were destroyed when an ambulance station was targeted during "Cast Lead". The skills of many national medics within Gaza have deteriorated through the lack of use and ongoing continuation/refresher training. Lastly, as the shortage of medical supplies and

equipment continues, their use in hospitals gets priority over prehospital care.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is a new Swedish authority responsible for all work related to public safety, emergency management, and civil defense. MSB replaces the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) which for many years has been a well known organization within the global Mine Action world. In the Gaza Strip, MSB has been providing an in-kind Operations Officer and a Medical Coordinator to UNMAT-GO throughout 2009. The MSB/UNMAT Medical Coordinator, Lars Holmgren, organizes the medical support for the EOD Team. He has also established a close relationship with the Ministry of Health Emergency Department, who is ensuring medical support to the UNMAT EOD Teams through the presence of their paramedics and

ambulances on site. Mr. Holmgren has also been conducting medical exercises and CASEVAC drills for the medical teams on site, as well as Quality Assurance and Quality Controls on the Ambulances and the Paramedics working in the field, to ensure a sufficient medical support for the EOD Teams. **Global Medic-the David McAnthony Gibson foundation**, was founded over 10 years ago by Rahul Singh in Toronto and is comprised almost entirely of volunteers - mostly paramedics, but also police officers and firefighters. The mandate of GlobalMedic includes water purification as well as emergency medical response to disasters. They deployed in the Gaza Strip in late January 2009 initially to respond to the humanitarian crisis. As a member of the UNMAT-GO, GlobalMedic role is to provide medical support to the MAG EOD teams working in the field, also

treating the teams and support staff for general health ailments. Yvonne Malbasha also provides ongoing medical exercises for the EOD teams, Basic First Aid skills for the national MAG staff, and exercises of local medics to enable them to respond to any emergency situation they may encounter during their work with UNMAT-GO.



A report by Lars Holmgren/MSB Medical Coordinator & Yvonne Malbasha/Global Medic

UNMAT-GO

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Useful Mine Action Websites

www.mineaction.org

www.gichd.org

www.mineactionstandards.org

www.maginternational.org

www.globalmedic.org

www.msbmyndigheten.se

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR UNRWA IN JABALYA CAMP

At the request of UNRWA, a risk assessment was carried out on 19 November 2009 on a property located in Jabalia camp area, in Northern Gaza. The property is a typical structure found throughout Gaza. Mr Ken Dunn/MAG TFM commenced the risk assessment on the roof to get an idea of the number of entry holes and found three of them. As he moved down through the third and second floors, he could trace the route taken by the weapons. On the third floor, he found the body of a Mk 82 500lb aircraft bomb which had not functioned correctly; whilst the main charge was not present there was still substantial HE residue to be hazardous. On the second floor, an entry hole through the wall and

approximately 18 inches of the base/body of another Mk 82 500lb aircraft bomb with the Tail Fuze (263N) were still present and had not functioned; while in this case there was no HE fill left, the Fuze was hazardous. Continuing the search of the various floors, the EOD expert found other homemade items including two grenades, two HEAT (PG7 type) warheads, five rocket motors, initiators, a small anti-vehicle mine and two empty AK47 magazines, which were subsequently made safe and removed. The property was therefore assessed as having a "high" risk, with the recommendation to conduct a search of all the floors and rooms before any rubble removal operation is commenced.



A report compiled by Kenneth Dunn/MAG Technical Field Manager

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