



**take action clear mines**

## **DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION**



### **FINAL REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION SERVICE**

**1 May to 31 May 2004**

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## **GLOSSARY**

BAC -	Battle Area Clearance
EOD -	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
HMA -	Humanitarian Mine Action
IDET -	International Development and Evaluation Team
IMSMA -	Information Management System for Mine Action
KDP -	Kurdistan Democratic Party
MAG -	Mines Advisory Group
MAT -	Mine Action Team
NCCI	NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq
NMAA -	National Mine Action Authority
PUK -	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RMAC -	Regional Mine Action Centre
RoP -	Roots of Peace
SOP -	Standard Operating Procedures
UNMAS -	United Nations Mine Action Service
VBIED -	Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device

## 1. PROJECT DATA

<b>Project Name:</b>	Development through Humanitarian Mine Action
<b>Project Location:</b>	Northern Iraq
<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	Mines Advisory Group (MAG) 47 Newton Street, Manchester, M1 1FT, UK Charity No: 1083008 Company No: 4016409
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<b>Donor/Partner Agency:</b>	Roots of Peace via UNMAS
<b>MAG Grant Reference:</b>	B01RO592
<b>Project Budget:</b>	\$9,900
<b>Project Period:</b>	01 May – 31 May 2004
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	01 May – 31 May 2004
<b>Submission Date:</b>	06 July 2004

## 2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Through the removal of development constraints via effective humanitarian mine action (HMA, this project partnership between MAG and Roots of Peace (RoP) via the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) aimed to contribute to the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in northern Iraq in the post-war phase. This was to be achieved through the effective clearance of land for community use, such as crop cultivation or animal grazing.

The project successfully achieved this objective through a combination of key HMA activities, including mine clearance, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), battle area clearance (BAC), and survey and demarcation of dangerous areas. This was despite the ongoing security problems throughout much of Iraq, which had caused a temporary suspension of all MAG operational activities during late April. Activities resumed on 9 May, and continued uninterrupted for the remainder of the project duration.

## 3. POLITICAL AND SECURITY OVERVIEW

The security situation in Iraq remained hazardous throughout the project. This meant that the operational area was restricted by security considerations throughout the project period. In particular, the project area in Chamchamal district identified in the initial proposal was not safe to work in, due to the declining security situation. As a result, the team was deployed on other high priority tasks as close as possible to the planned project area.

The programme suspended all activities and relocated all international staff to Amman, Jordan during April. The final 4 international staff members left Iraq on 18 April, with the 2 senior members of staff returning on 28 April to conduct an assessment of the situation. After a few days, they concluded that it was safe for the remaining international staff to return, and for operations to restart on 9 May.

There was a significant deterioration in the situation in Erbil on 31 May, the location of the MAG programme HQ and one of the two main sector operating bases. A VBIED was detonated under a police officer's vehicle at approximately 05:00, and a series of Katyusha rockets were fired at a PUK building. These were the first serious incidents in Erbil itself since 1 February, when twin suicide bombings at KDP and PUK offices killed over 100 people.

Just south of the green line, the frequency and scale of incidents continued to increase in both Mosul and Kirkuk, and their surrounding areas. Mosul continued to experience a large number of attacks on both military and civilian targets, which led to a suspension of all travel by MAG staff to the area. In Kirkuk, an increasing number of political assassinations together with more general attacks on specific sectors of the population caused concern that more widespread ethnically-based conflict could be a real possibility.

MAG deployed a long-term member of staff with experience of working in Asia and Europe as Security Coordinator in northern Iraq. He arrived in-country on 31 May, with terms of reference to provide a dedicated capacity for monitoring and reacting to security reports, providing training for staff, security liaison with other organisations, together with recommendations on all aspects of security management and awareness.

MAG continued to share security information with all relevant agencies and coordinating bodies throughout Iraq, recognising that information sharing is vital to creating a safe environment for humanitarian agencies and others to work in Iraq. Senior staff regularly attended security meetings in Erbil hosted by the NCCI. Daily monitoring of all available sources of information on security throughout the country was undertaken within the programme in northern Iraq, and at MAG HQ in the UK.

In addition, MAG maintains comprehensive Security Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which detail security phases and action to be taken on reaching each of these stages. These are regularly reviewed and updated, and provided the basis upon which possible areas of operational activity were determined.

#### 4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

As explained in Section 3, the team was unable to work in the village of Mwafar. The Mine Action Team funded through this grant was deployed to work on high priority tasks in the area of Qadir Karam in the Governorate of Sulaymaniyah (see attached case study). These multi-skilled teams have the capacity to undertake a range of activities, including survey and assessment, demarcation of dangerous areas, mine clearance, and explosive ordnance disposal.

The team funded under this project achieved the following results during the project timeframe:



**MAG Technical Field Manager Salaam Muhammed (left) at a recent handover ceremony for Belan minefield, Qadir Karam, Sulymaniyah Governorate. The photo includes the mayor of Qadir Karam (centre) and the local police chief (back right)**

### Demining/Explosive Ordnance Disposal/Battle Area Clearance

The Team destroyed a total of 21 anti-personnel landmines and cleared a total area of **30,706m<sup>2</sup> (electronic Clearance -19,098m<sup>2</sup>, visual Clearance - 11,608m<sup>2</sup>)**

#### Demarcation

The team demarcated **84,929m<sup>2</sup>** of dangerous land erecting a total of **1,560m** perimeter fencing to protect the local community.

#### Survey & Reconnaissance

The team conducted **1 survey and reconnaissance task** which was fed back to MAG programme management to identify priority task areas.

#### Total no of beneficiaries

<b>Direct beneficiaries -</b>	<b>4 families</b>
<b>Indirect beneficiaries -</b>	<b>1,550 families</b>

Indirect beneficiary families are worked out based on the fact that a dangerous area in or around a community puts the whole community at risk, and produces blockages on community resources. Therefore, teams will gather data on the number of families within then affected community, which are added together to produce the overall indirect beneficiary numbers for the project.

The cleared land is now being used by local people for agricultural purposes, more specifically growing corps, grazing livestock and hunting/fishing.

## **5. MANAGEMENT**

### **Internal Arrangements and Structure**

MAG's programme operates with a two-branch structure for the implementation of work due to the geographical spread of MAG's teams throughout northern Iraq. These two branches, based in the cities of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, are supported and coordinated by a central headquarters, which also monitors technical standards, evaluates technical operations, collates data and ensures administrative and financial accountability. The HQ was relocated to Erbil in late September 2003, having previously been located in Sulaymaniyah for a decade. This was so that programme management is close to the location of the new RMAC-North in Erbil, and many of MAG's other key partners in the region.

### **International Staff Support**

During this reporting period there was an average of 12 international staff members working within the programme. This compares to over 600 local staff.

## **6. COORDINATION**

MAG coordinated its activities throughout this project with relevant coordinating bodies in northern Iraq. In addition, MAG has received formal accreditation from the NMAA.

Throughout the reporting period, activities were coordinated with other implementing organisations through the RMAC-N in Erbil, together with the Kurdish Mine Coordination Offices (MCOs) in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. This was the mechanism adopted by all international and national mine action NGOs in northern Iraq during the reporting period.

MAG attended regular meetings with RMAC staff in Erbil, and consulted on a more informal basis with RMAC staff on a daily basis. Operational plans, and reports on activities completed, were submitted to the RMAC-N and NMAA in Baghdad as per the requirements of these bodies.

The coordination process is being facilitated by the installation and implementation of the IMSMA system within MAG's northern Iraq operations. This process progressed, following initial training courses on the system by staff at the RMAC-N during February. This will enable the information gathered and work done by MAG teams to be fed into IMSMA in Erbil, to allow greater effectiveness in the management and coordination of the mine action sector throughout the north.

## 7. FINANCE

The total budget for this project amounts to \$9,900. A financial report detailing expenditure to the end of the reporting period is attached in Annex B.

## 8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES



**This partnership between Roots of Peace/UNMAS and MAG has contributed towards making northern Iraq a safer place for future generations of Iraqis**

Despite the generally poor level of security throughout much of Iraq throughout the project period, MAG continued to work on high priority tasks in areas of northern Iraq where the local population is at risk from landmines and other forms of explosive ordnance. The only exception was during the early stages of May when the significant deterioration in the situation throughout most of Iraq meant that all activities were suspended until 9 May, with all international staff relocated to Amman for a couple of weeks prior to restarting operations.

This award continued to make a key impact on the lives of

the people of northern Iraq through the removal of thousands of dangerous items and clearance of dangerous areas in high risk, high priority tasks. MAG is grateful to both Roots of Peace and UNMAS for funding these key HMA activities in northern Iraq.

## Qadir Karam Case Study Feb 2004

Qadir Karam used to be a thriving community with over 3,000 inhabitants. It is a village in the Chamchamal district of Sulaymaniyah, which was destroyed by Government of Iraq (GoI) forces during the Anfal Campaign of 1988. It is located just southwest of the 'green line' - the former front line between by Government of Iraq (GoI) and Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Many villagers from Qadir Karam were killed during the Anfal, the remainder were forced from their homes and fled to Chamchamal town itself, and the city of Sulaymaniyah. GoI forces destroyed the village leaving only the mosque standing. A military position was established, and the area surrounding it heavily mined to protect it from attacks by the Kurdish Peshmerga forces.



The flattened village of Qadir Karam as it looks today.



The repaired bridge crossing the Rokhana River in Qadir Karam. Minefields cover the area of land in the far right where one MAT is working.

After the withdrawal of GoI forces in late March and early April 2003, MAG advance teams visited the village. They discovered the huge band of minefields surrounding it, large stores of landmines within the mosque, and the bridge across the river had been destroyed. The few remaining local people still visited the mosque daily to pray. The mosque contains the tombs of Sheik Abdul Karim and Sheik Kadir, ancient Kurdish martyrs. People used to come from all over the region to pray at their tombs.

Rooms in the mosque contained various types of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines in a dangerous condition. One mine detonating would have caused the others to explode, completely destroying the mosque. MAG Mine Action Teams (MATs) were able to conduct emergency work such as clearing and destroying the mines within the mosque, and demining the road. Clearance of an access route to the bridge allowed repair work to be carried out. The bridge has now been reconstructed and repair work on the mosque is underway.

Following this immediate work, however, MAG teams had to be withdrawn due to the deteriorating security situation which posed serious a risk to staff.

The stabilisation of security in the immediate area has allowed one MAT to resume essential survey, demarcation and clearance work in the last week. They are dealing not only with minefields laid at varying times between 1988 and 2003, but also items of unexploded ordnance resulting from the conflict last year. There is a vast area of 300,000m<sup>2</sup> which now needs to be made safe. MAG plans to have at least another two MATs working in the area soon.



**The MAT carries out demarcation work prior to minefield clearance. Teams also destroy in situ the mines collected by local people. The top of Qadir Karam mosque can be seen in the background.**

Work has been made more difficult for the teams because local people have attempted to remove items themselves to clear the area for grazing sheep. An accident occurred only three weeks ago when a local shepherd lost his leg to a landmine. By moving mines, people have disrupted the landmine patterns, which will make it harder work for the MAG teams to assess minefield boundaries and undertake clearance.



**Shepherd passing through Qadir Karam close to the repaired bridge.**

One family has already returned to the village. There are 1500 families who also want to return as soon as it has been made safe and homes have been built. There are plans in place to construct houses in the village for the returnees. In the meantime, shepherds continue to graze their animals across the area. A small number of shepherds have received Mine Risk Education (MRE) from MAG when the advance team accessed the area in April 2003. A needs assessment is currently being conducted by MAG community liaison staff. This will be followed up with appropriately targeted MRE for shepherds and other at-risk groups of local people such as returning displaced persons. This activity will complement the clearance work, which due to the vast range of minefield will take many months to complete.