



HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE 2018

9,235 equipped school backpacks distributed

12,057 men, women, boys and girls
Mine Risk Education in **236** sessions



Landmine/ERW Training
98 UN Personnel

10 ERW and **153** SAA destroyed



MRE Training of Community Development Committees



Controlled demolition on 24 June

The UNMAS Integrated Road Assessment and Clearance Teams (IRACT) in support of UNISFA and humanitarian actors remained fully operational in June, carrying out Battle Area Clearance (BAC) operations, Non-Technical Surveys (NTS) and Mine Risk Education (MRE).

In June, UNMAS teams continued the clearance operations at the former Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) defensive position in Abyei town. The task was found to be challenging due to the high metal contamination and the site being in a populated residential area. The task was concluded at the end of June and UNMAS teams formally handed over the cleared land to the Abyei Community Representative. In total, 8 Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and 153 Small Arms Ammunition (SAA) have been recovered and subsequently destroyed on 24 June in a controlled and organised demolition. Additionally, 2 ERW and 5 SAA have been identified through NTS and MRE activities conducted in 39 villages in the Abyei area. They have been cleared and also destroyed on 24 June.

Five UNMAS supported teams, comprised of three contractor teams and two local NGO teams, conducted MRE activities throughout Northern, Central, and Southern Abyei, and informed community members, nomads, and internally displaced people (IDPs) of the dangers posed by ERW. MRE was delivered to 12,057 men, women, boys and girls through 236 sessions. At the request of IOM, UNMAS teams also conducted MRE sessions in five IOM Adult Learning Centers, reaching a total of 203 adult students, out of which 170 women, 30 men and 3 boys. As part of MRE outreach activities, UNMAS teams continued delivering MRE sessions in local schools and distributed a total of 9,235 equipped school bags in 14 schools. Furthermore, UNMAS delivered six landmine and ERW risk education sessions to 98 UNPOL and UNISFA military observers as part of their induction training.

UNMAS also participated in IOM-organized training of Community Development Committees (CDCs) on 27 June, with an MRE session focused on including mine risk awareness in grassroots community planning and building the knowledge needed to guide the community for better reporting of possible explosive hazards. After the session, the CDC members commended UNMAS and decided to include MRE needs and strategies in their official community development plan.

UNMAS continued its support for the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), and in June provided Patrol Support Teams (PSTs) and transportation for five Ground Monitoring Missions (GMMs) in JBVMM Sector 2, at Tishwin Team Site (TS).

At the end of June, UNMAS IRACT demobilized and will remobilize at the end of the rainy season. However, one PST remains operational within the Abyei Area throughout the rainy season, available for any Emergency Ordnance Disposal (EOD) requirements.



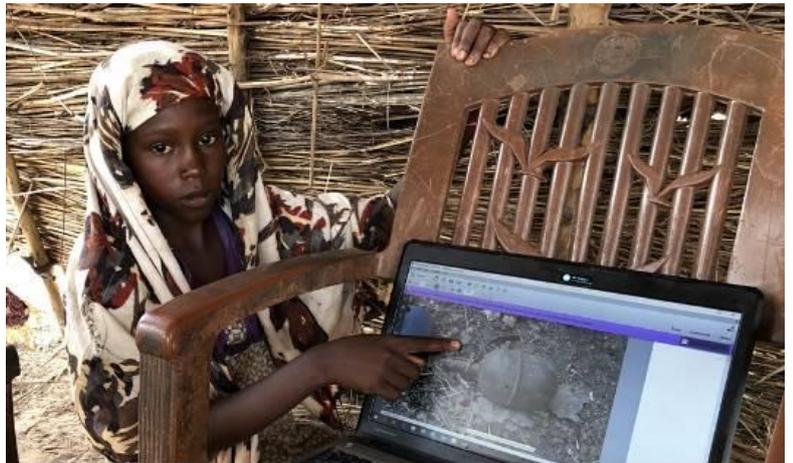
Field Story: Mine Risk Education in Action

On 24 June, at around 10:30 five children of ages from 4 to 11 were playing by the road in Teshwin village, situated about 2km south of Diffra. On the side of the road, 4-year-old Hamdan Beshir noticed something rusty popping out of the cracked soil. He was excited about finding a new toy, so he dug it out and joyfully started playing with it. It only took a couple of minutes for the boy to mistakenly remove the “toy’s” safety pin and put his and his friends’ lives in danger.

Luckily, 10-year old Amira Ibrahim was playing next to her 4-year-old friend, and noticed the new object he was fiddling with. She immediately thought back to what she had learned in school just 3 weeks prior, when UNMAS teams delivered Mine Risk Education (MRE) sessions throughout schools in northern Abyei, including Teshwin village. She remembered the many pictures she was shown at school, and recognized the dangerous item from one of the pictures – a hand grenade. Amira reacted swiftly to protect herself and her friends. She grabbed the hand grenade from the boy’s hand and threw it across the road as hard as she could, shouting at her friends to run and hide.

As the kids ran for cover, the grenade exploded loudly and pieces of shrapnel dispersed through the air. The brave Amira sprinted away from the explosion, but only managed to get 15 meters away. Her friend Haweyda, the oldest of the group, stayed back to make sure the youngest are safe, and was 33 meters away at the time of the detonation. Fortunately, the injuries Amira and Haweyda sustained were very minor, but their courageous actions and prompt reactions saved both their and their friends’ lives. Had they not known about the danger posed by explosive remnants of war, the story would have ended tragically.

At UNMAS, we take our motto seriously: “Needs driven. People centred.” The safety of all children in Abyei area is one of our utmost priorities, and the people of Abyei are at the center of our work. For this reason, UNMAS has reached out to all schools in both northern and southern parts of Abyei, and not only delivered mine risk education sessions, but also distributed more than 17,000 backpacks equipped with school accessories and mine risk education materials. UNMAS will continue to work with its implementing partners to ensure all children in Abyei are aware of the risks posed by explosive remnants of war, and such stories will be even harder to come by in the future.



Amira recognized the explosive device from an UNMAS Mine Risk Education (MRE) session she attended at her school a few weeks before.



Only two of the children, Amira and her friend Haweyda, sustained very minor injuries.



IF YOU SEE AN ITEM OF CONCERN, DO NOT TOUCH IT! CONTACT UNMAS IMMEDIATELY!

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**NEEDS
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The United Nations Mine Action Service is the United Nations entity on explosive hazards and the coordinator for mine action within the United Nations system. UNMAS provides critical support to the protection of civilians, peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and development, allowing UN personnel to rapidly deploy, and refugees and internally displaced persons to safely return to their homes. UNMAS is hosted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. UNMAS supports the UNISFA mandate, ensuring Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) freedom of movement as well as the identification and clearance of mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in the Abyei Area and Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ).

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