



## **Statement of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster on Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan**

*Bruno Donat, Global Coordinator, Mine Action Area of Responsibility,  
Chief, UNMAS Geneva office*

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Imagine that you live in a town plagued by explosive ordnance. Imagine that your daughter, son, partner, wife, husband or any family member, falls victim to an explosive remnant of war. I would not wish for anyone to see the immediate aftermath of an explosion, but for millions of people in Afghanistan, this threat is real.

Some girls and boys cannot receive education, some farmers cannot raise livestock, and over half a million displaced people cannot travel without the threat of losing a limb or a life. It is also deplorable that even those who risk their lives to mitigate the effects of explosive ordnance should themselves be targeted. We still mourn the humanitarian deminers who were attacked in Afghanistan on 8 June 2021 – the deadliest attack on deminers in the history of the mine action sector.

In Helmand, Kandahar, Kunduz and more, conflicts have left abandoned improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war behind. The mine action sector in Afghanistan continues to receive requests for the clearance of explosive ordnance.

But, what can we do - or rather, what must we do?

We must improve access for humanitarian teams to reach those most at risk. We must mitigate the danger presented by explosive hazards to Afghans and to humanitarian actors, by clearing explosives from the ground and by teaching people how to stay safe.

Our colleagues plan, for now, to reach some 1.5 million people, and they can. Mine action organizations are deploying teams now, but at the moment, some \$8.6 million is urgently needed. We welcome those countries and organizations who have expressed interest in continuing their gracious and generous assistance, and we encourage your solidarity and commitment.

In the words of the Secretary-General, from his most recent Report on Assistance in Mine Action (A/76/283): “Funding for protection responses must be scaled up, including through the Mine Action Area of Responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster”.

We call upon donors to prioritize and consider sequencing of interventions. Prior to even thinking of early recovery and much later development, one needs more immediate life-saving humanitarian action, protection and peace dividends. And to roll out humanitarian action, in many locations, one needs to remove explosive ordnance.

When these explosives are cleared, roads can be rebuilt, food can be delivered, boys and girls can return to schools, farmers can return to fields, and displaced people can travel.

As we further express solidarity with the Afghan women, men, girls and boys, let us support this window of opportunity, to stay and deliver.

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