



UNMAS

Occupied Palestinian Territory

August Newsletter: Explosive Hazard Response



In Focus:

In August, while on a mission to assess a new route to open humanitarian access, UNMAS identified explosive ordnance (EO) that made the road ahead inaccessible. There were three possible responses to this challenge:

1. UNMAS safely disposes of the EO;
2. UNMAS safely moves the item off the road and establishes protective works;
3. The mission finds an alternative nearby route to reach community members.

With trucks halted, the mission requested permission from Israeli Forces for UNMAS to move the item. Unfortunately this was denied, as were requests to proceed on alternative routes. The convoy was forced to turn around.

The next day, Israeli Forces approved a request for UNMAS to move the item off the road. However, due to a six-hour delay in receiving permission to proceed, the mission was again cancelled and the threat remained.

So far since October 2023, UNMAS has encountered 548 EO items in Gaza. UNMAS marks and cordons off the areas to mitigate the risk. However, without approval to move or dispose of items, they remain on roads and near hospitals, shelters and schools, threatening community members and further shrinking critical humanitarian space months or even years into the future.

The lack of enabling environment to navigate Gaza and to dispose or render EO safe prevents UNMAS from doing its job, despite having the expertise to do so. UNMAS continues to call on authorities to allow a comprehensive response to EO, making Gaza safer for community members and facilitating safe humanitarian response.

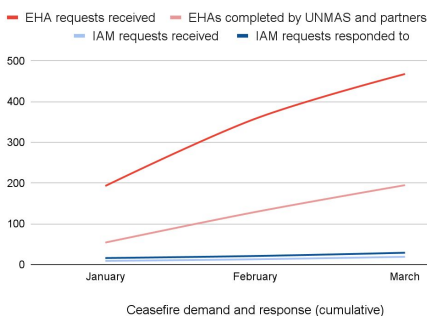
Making lifesaving messaging accessible

To mitigate the threat that EO poses to communities, raising awareness and teaching people about safe behaviours is key.

UNMAS partner Palestinian Organization for Development (POD) worked with UNMAS to design and paint two murals sharing key messages in a simple and accessible way in carefully selected locations in Gaza. These murals will stand outside Al Shifa Hospital (Gaza city) and on a busy road near Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir al Balah, sharing key messages to community members.



Credit: POD



While responding to the current situation, UNMAS is also preparing for a huge surge in demand in the event of a ceasefire in Gaza. As this graph shows, current capacity is insufficient for the sector to meet humanitarian mine action needs in ceasefire times. **UNMAS** appeals to donors to continue supporting our work and welcomes invitations to provide further information about our needs.



For more information:

Chief Mine Action Programme Mr. Luke Irving
luke.irving@un.org



Website



YouTube



X (Twitter)



Facebook



UNMAS

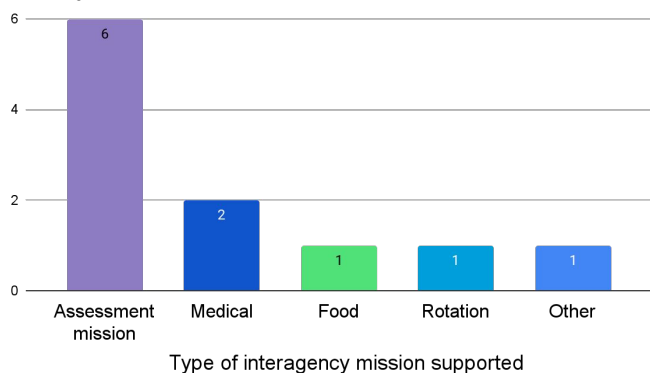
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UNMAS continues to be present in Gaza city as part of the mission support team. Additionally, UNMAS completed **11 interagency missions**. This enabled the World Food Programme, World Health Organization, UNDSS and UNICEF to continue operating throughout Gaza, safely navigating explosive threats.

Still, **nine missions were denied** by Israeli Forces and **seven were cancelled** by partners due to security concerns or movement constraints.



UNMAS received **13 explosive hazard assessment (EHA) requests** in August. Compared to 194 received in January 2025, this shows the extent to which humanitarian partners' activities are limited in Gaza.

EOD Officers **completed five requests**, three of which were received in July. One request was cancelled and 10 others were for EHAs in Gaza city. Due to the complex security situation, these are currently on hold.

EHA: indirect beneficiaries

456,040

EO identified

32

	Conflict-related casualties reported in August (WHO)	EO victims reported in August*
Killed	3,225	0
Injured	13,017	2
Total	16,242	2

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

UNMAS delivered EO risk education to **155 humanitarians** in Gaza and the West Bank, enabling them to navigate explosive threats in support of their aid delivery.



POD reached **59,155** conflict-affected people through **1,886 sessions** along key access routes and at health centres to teach people how to respond safely to the explosive threat in Gaza.

UNMAS identified 32 EO items at seven sites. Although unable to move or dispose of them, where permitted UNMAS marked and cordoned the items off to mitigate the risk to community members. Often, this allowed routes and sites to continue being used safely.

Threat since 7 Oct 2023

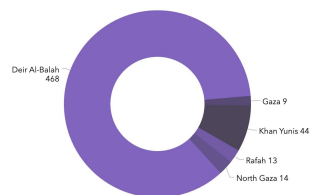
EO identified

548

EO victims reported since Oct 2023*

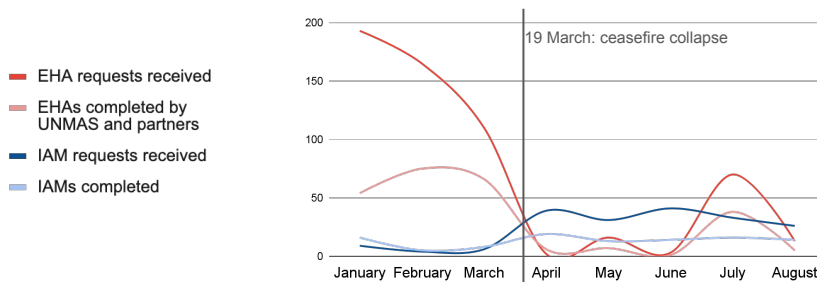
Killed	46
Injured	231
Total	277

of EO per Governorates



Response in 2025 to date

During this emergency period, UNMAS expertise is requested for lifesaving missions and humanitarian activities. Although UNMAS responds to all requests received, frequent denials and access challenges continue to prevent missions from going ahead - or from being requested at all.



*These are only incidents that have been reported to UNMAS; these figures are likely much higher.