

18 Feb 2026 -14:18

Belgium, pioneer in humanitarian demining in Iraq and Syria

Belgium continues its commitment to humanitarian demining in Iraq and Syria and contributed 1.35 million euros to the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in 2025. As such, since 2019, Belgium has already invested more than 13 million euros in mine countermeasure initiatives in both countries.

Mine clearance is a priority of the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. Indeed, the presence of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war remains a serious threat to the safety of civilians in Syria and Iraq. This also hinders access to roads, farmland and water sources, undermining food security, livelihoods and economic recovery. This forces people into displacement, hinders reconstruction and imposes enormous costs for clean-up and medical care.

According to Maxime Prévot, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation, *"demining restores more than just physical safety: it gives communities space to breathe, grow and regain their dignity. When fields can be cultivated again, children can return to school safely and local economies come back to life, demining is the basis for real reconstruction and sustainable development."*

In Iraq, UNMAS is working on capacity building and technical support for the national demining authorities and local civil society. In Syria, where the state apparatus has been rebuilt since the fall of Bashar al-Assad, UNMAS is supporting the authorities in rebuilding their technical and operational capabilities. In addition, UNMAS focuses its efforts on the coordination of the demining sector, at the service of other demining organisations in the field.

In both countries, Belgium also welcomes UNMAS' efforts to promote gender equality, including by deploying women deminers and integrating women into decision-making structures. This contributes to inclusive and resilient communities.

Thanks to the Belgian contributions in favour of mine clearance, we ensure that life can go on, for current and future generations.



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