

For immediate release: 14 July 2017

Urgent call for action against landmines and booby traps in and around Mosul, Iraq

Following the latest destructive phase of the conflict for Mosul, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) warn that the threat from improvised landmines and booby traps is severe. Many people who survived the war will not survive the peace.

Nina Seecharan, MAG's Country Director in Iraq, urged the international community to help prevent needless loss of life: *"MAG has not seen landmines used on this scale in 20 years, this is a humanitarian landmine emergency."*

"It is imperative that humanitarian organisations gain access to former conflict areas as quickly as possible but the scale of contamination from landmines and booby traps will hinder early recovery and stabilisation efforts and slow access to the people most in need."

In one village close to Mosul, ten people died and five were injured by improvised landmines and booby traps as they returned home. This is just one of hundreds of villages affected by these indiscriminate weapons.

Nina said *"The need for international support cannot be exaggerated. People wanting to return home following the violence are unable to do so, afraid of the danger lurking in their damaged or destroyed houses. Having already suffered so much, what these communities want more than anything is to get on with rebuilding their lives."*

In the last year MAG has cleared 10,405 improvised landmines and booby traps from areas previously controlled by Da'esh, making more than 10 million square meters of land safe for more than 230,000 men, women and children to live free from injury and death at the hands of these indiscriminate weapons. It is imperative that any remaining explosive devices are located and safely destroyed.

MAG has been working in Iraq since 1992, but operations have scaled up dramatically since the Mosul offensive began in October 2016. Now that the large-scale conflict is drawing to an end, MAG is calling for increased support to ensure that rebuilding can begin and people can return home in safety and without fear.

ENDS

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- Nina Seecharan, MAG's Iraq Country Director and Sean Sutton, International Communications Manager are available for comment.
- To read about MAG's work in Iraq: www.maginternational.org/iraq-emergency
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