

MAG/JASMAR Monthly Programme Update July 2009

Summary of Activities and Achievements

- UNOPS Contract in Kassala completed on schedule
- MAG holds the first land hand-over ceremony in Kassala State, attended by the Director of NMAC, Deputy Director of UNMAO and the British Ambassador
- 47 MRE sessions delivered to 2288 beneficiaries in Kassala State
- A total of 29,805 m² cleared this month from Abu Gamel and Al Lafa sites
- 149 Anti-Tank mines, 250 Anti-Personnel mines and 4 items of UXO found and destroyed in Kassala this month.



Director of NMAC, Dep Director UNMAO, MAG TFM Team Leader and TFM's sign hand over documents at the Official Handover Ceremony on 29 July 2009

Overview

MAG has now come to the end of the 2008/2009 demining season during which time we have been running three mine action teams, consisting of one Multi-Task Team and two Mine Clearance teams in Kassala (MTT 1 and MCTs 5 and 6) which have been funded through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Mine Action Assistance, a contract managed by UNOPS for the UN Mine Action Service. MAG also runs one CL/MRE team in Kassala, funded by DFID.

The UNOPS project in Kassala that was planned to end on 30 June 2009 was extended until 3 August 2009, with the last day of clearance operations on the 27 July 2009. MAG is pleased to have successfully completed this contract and celebrated achievements at a hand-over ceremony held in the Police Officer's Hall in Kassala Town on 29 July, which was attended by the Director of NMAC, Deputy Director of UNMAO, the British Ambassador and local dignitaries representing beneficiary communities.

De-mining and Clearance Operations

Kassala

MTT 1 continued to conduct Technical Surveys of the Suspected Hazardous Area (SHA) at Abu Gamel, completing six of the areas to be surveyed and an access lane to another three areas. The onset of the rainy season meant that operations were stopped for two days as roads became impassable which prevents safe evacuation in case of an emergency. During the month of July MTT 1 cleared 7,348 m² of land and destroyed 32 No 4 Iranian Anti Personnel mines, 1 PRB-M35 Anti Personnel mine, 10 PRB-M3 Anti Tank mines and 2 items of UXO.

Throughout this demining season MTT 1 has conducted 12 General Mine Action Assessments in the Hamish Korieb and Telkuk area and conducted three Technical Surveys. The first survey, NR 643 in Garada cleared 1883 m² of land, which reduced the area to 9, 435 m². The second survey, NR 679 in Al Lafa, cleared 7070 m², reducing an SHA of 750 000 m² to 48 757 m², releasing 701 243 m² of land. The final Technical Survey, of the SHA NR 511 Abu Gamel, consisted of ten Dangerous Areas of which five were surveyed. MAG has cleared 16, 135 m² out of the total SHA area of 2,620, 000 m². The five DAs surveyed have now been reduced to a defined area of 96 754 m².

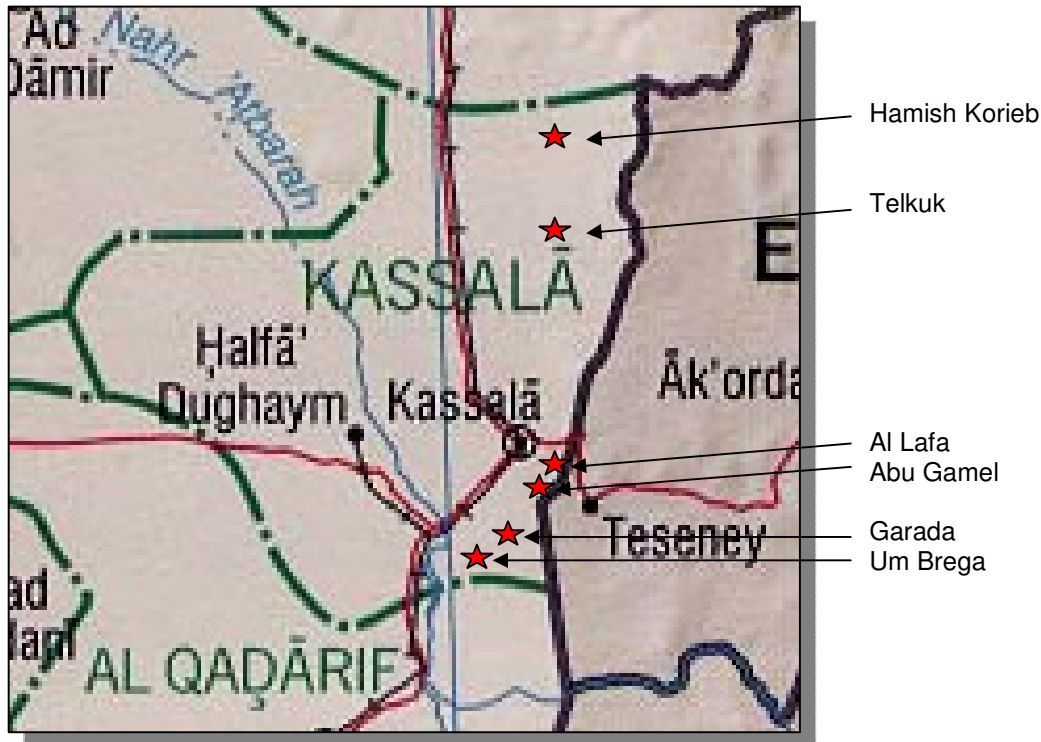
MCTs 5 and 6 continued operations on Task NR 709 Minefields 204 and 205, completing the task on 23 July, despite two days of suspension of activities as rains prevented access to sites, preventing safe evacuation in case of an emergency. This month MCTs 5 and 6 together cleared 22, 457 m² of land. A total of 167 No4 Iranian Anti Personnel mines, 50 PRB-M35 Anti Personnel mines 139 PRB-M3 Anti Tank mines were found and destroyed by the teams.

MAG has continued to execute operations to the highest standard and of the five external QA checks that were done this month, three were graded as high and two were graded medium.



A deminer works on the final stages of Minefield 205 in Al Lafa

Since October 2008, MCTs 5 and 6 have cleared four minefields: one in Garada, one in Um Brega and two in Al Lafa. In total all the teams, manual and survey, have cleared a total of 162 561 m² which has released 838 716 m² of land back to the community for farming, housing and road construction. This is equivalent to over 207 football fields of land!



Map of the areas in Kassala in which MAG has worked

Between October 2008 and July 2009 MAG's teams have found and destroyed 488 Anti-Personnel mines, 273 Anti-Tank mines and 54 items of UXO, equivalent to 1.7 tons of explosive. As the 2008/2009 demining season draws to a close, MAG would like to extend thanks to all its employees and partners for their hard work and dedication which has produced such outstanding results.

In September MAG will continue activities in Kassala State with two Multi Task Teams, funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID).

Community Liaison / Mine Risk Education Activities

Operations in Kassala are supported by MAG's MRE/CL team which is also tasked by the UN. In addition to providing MRE this team also facilitates liaison between demining teams and the local community to ensure operations are conducted safely. In July the MRE team have delivered 42 MRE sessions to 2288 beneficiaries.

Organisational and Partnership Development

Ruairi McDermott, MAG's Country Programme Manager (CPM) arrived in Khartoum on the 11th of July and met with the directors of Jasmara, UNMAO and NMAC. Travel

documents were swiftly delivered and Ruairi travelled to Kassala to visit teams at their sites. On the 15 July Ruairi travelled to Juba and expects to return to Khartoum in mid/late August.

External Relations

MAG attended the UNMAO Mine Action Coordination meeting in Kassala early this month, represented by Catherine, the Project Manager (PM) in Northern Sudan. The CPM and PM have held a number of meetings with partners and potential partners to raise awareness of MAG's activities in Northern Sudan. These include representatives of the Italian Cooperation Agency in Kassala, the Belgian Honorary Consul, the Norwegian Embassy, the Japanese Embassy and the EC Delegation in Khartoum.

Whilst in Kassala, the CPM and PM were honoured to be invited to meetings with the regional Director of NMAC, the Commission of HAC Kassala, the Regional Director of National Security and the Commissioner for Rural Kassala. MAG is grateful for the support expressed at these meetings and looks forward to building upon these strong and productive relationships.

On the 29 July a formal Hand-Over Ceremony was held to celebrate the completion of the UNOPS project and the release of land by the local community. The event was honoured by the attendance of the Director of NMAC, Brigadier Khalid; the Deputy Director of UNMAO, Ms Leonie Barnes; the British Ambassador, Dr Rosalind Marsden, and a Sheikh representing the communities of Um Brega, Garada and Al Lafa. The event was



British Ambassador Dr Rosalind Marsden (centre) gives her speech at the Official Hand-Over Ceremony

attended by over 150 people and featured a demonstration of demining with an indoor simulation of a minefield and an MRE presentation from MAG's MRE officers. The event was closed by the formal signing of the hand-over papers for Al Lafa minefield by the Director of NMAC, the Deputy Director of UNMAO and MAG representatives. This was the first such hand-over to take place in Kassala and MAG looks forward to many more such in the future.

MAG/JASMAR would like to express gratitude to the following donors to the North Sudan program:

- Department for International Development (DFID)
- Islamic Relief / Consortium Project (IR/UNDP)
- United Nations Mine Action Services (UNMAS)
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