



## Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA)

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### **NEW PROJECT TO CLEAR MINES FROM GHAZNI CITY BEGINS**

#### *Ghazni Prepares to be named Islamic Centre of Civilisation 2013*

**26 August 2010.** This month a new project undertaken by OMAR, an Afghan humanitarian mine action NGO, will begin clearing minefields from the centre of Ghazni. This will support the city's preparations to be named Islamic Centre of Civilisation 2013 by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO). The project is funded by the Canadian Government through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, which is managed by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

The OMAR project will clear nine minefields through the deployment of eight manual demining teams, one mechanical demining unit, one mine detection dog set and one explosive ordnance disposal team. In total, there are 48 identified minefields remaining in the centre of Ghazni, which contaminate over six square kilometres of land, causing deaths and injuries as well as preventing the land from being used for housing or farming in at least 22 communities. This project will remove the impact of mines from seven communities including seven different sites of special archeological or historical importance, such as shrines and monuments.

Maxwell Kerley, Director of UNMAS, said:

"I am pleased that the work is now underway to clear the archaeologically and culturally rich city of Ghazni. We appeal to our donor partners and friends in the Islamic world to contribute further to this important work so that the families of Ghazni can, for the first time in 30 years, live free from the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war."

On completion of this project, if further funding was secured quickly, 12 demining teams could clear the remaining minefields in the centre in two years, in time for the city's designation as Islamic Centre of Civilisation 2013.



The project will follow the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan's model of 'Community Based Demining', whereby the majority of deminers will be recruited and trained from Ghazni itself with expert oversight from OMAR's experienced deminers. So far, 50 new jobs have been created in Ghazni through the project. The training of these deminers will be completed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September and they will join the teams who have begun the work so far. A further two teams will then be recruited and trained so that eventually all eight demining teams will comprise locally recruited people.

**About UNMAS**

The United Nations Mine Action Service is located in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

**About MACCA and MAPA**

The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA), supported by the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations, provides coordination, including planning, management and quality assurance for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, encompassing all mine action activities throughout the country. The UNMAS provides all financial support for the running of the MACCA.

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